

John Loveday. 1671.

A N
A L A R M
To Slumbring
CHRISTIANS,
Or the 74 & 88. 23.
P A R A B L E
Of the Wise and Foolish
V I R G I N S,
And of the
TALENTS, SHEEP and GOATS,
B E I N G

A plain and practical exposition of the whole
XXV Chapter of St. *Matthews* Gospel, call-
ing upon all Professors to a strict and
constant Watchfulness, lest their Lord at
his certain and second Coming, find them
not ready, but with their Lamps gone out.

*Blessed are those Servants whom the Lord when he
cometh shall find watching.*

*Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man com-
eth at an hour when ye think not, Luk. 12. 37. &c.*

By *Samuel Loveday.*



L O N D O N,

Printed for Francis Smith at the Elephant and Castle
near the Royal-Exchange in Cornhill. 1671.

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To Slumbering

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Of the

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Of the Wise and Foolish

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TALENTS, SHEEP, and GOATS

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XXV Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel
lying upon all Protestants in general and
constant Watchmen, self-styled as
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18:575

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THE EPISTLE

To the

READER

Friend, whoever thou art, into whose hands this insuing piece may come, I must say, the rudeness of speech and unpolished stile of the ensuing Book, doth necessarily (not complementally) call for a Prologue or Preface of Apology for itself; and this I say in its behalf, that it was never intended for so publick a view in the first study of it, but only to be communicated to that small Congregation over which I am concerned by the providence and grace of God, as a Pastor or Feeder; to whom or in whose hearing these things were more largely handled, for the space of one whole Year by the Author, who intended so to have left it, had not strong and following importunities from several who had been hearers of the matter more largely, changed my mind and prevailed with me to publish it; and if any by the publication receive any profit, they are debtors to the fore-named under God for it.

For my own part, I am (I can say truly) deeply sensible of much imperfection in the managment and that I shall need thy candid and favourable indulgence overlooking manner and heeding matter, as it agrees with the current of Scripture.

The brokenness and imperfections hereof were partly occasioned by the length of time since they were delivered, and partly that those notes remaining in

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my hands were very concise and brief, being but the very heads of the matter insisted on: this I only leave as a modest plea for my self, knowing that truth is of age to speak for it self.

And so I proceed to an Introduction to the matter it self, contained in the following discourse. The matter before us is excellent matter, though wrapt up in Parables, not with a design to lock it from us, but that in condescending to set forth heavenly things by earthly, we might the easier come at the meaning. Now this we must know, that all terms and circumstances in a Parable are not for probation but illustration: a Parable will not always (as we say,) run upon all four, but we must eye and observe the scope and design of a Parable; and it is the work of a Gospel Minister not only to Preach, but to expound and open the Scriptures, and divide (or cut asunder) the Scriptures, giving each their Portion. It was the work of our Lord Christ when he was on earth, not only to preach, as we find him doing, *Math. 5. Luk. 4.* but expounding the Scriptures. See that remarkable place, *Luk. 24. 27.* beginning at *Moses* and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself; though the Scriptures do in good measure expound themselves if well observed; yet the Lord in all ages appointed instruments for that work, God foresaw there would be need of Interpreters. When the *Eunuch* read the Prophet, he wanted some body to guide him, and God guides *Philip* to do this office. God usually conveys light by instruments whom he first enlightens.

The Subject which we have before us is a heart-searching Subject if seriously heeded; and as heart-work is the principal and only work which Professors are to be conversant about in this latter day, so it is to be feared there is no work more superficially carried on by most; some not knowing what it means, others forgetful of their hearts, not observing *Solomon's* Counsel, *Prov. 4. 23.* to keep the heart with all diligence.

The Apostle *St. Paul* in his days did foresee in the last days many Professors would be loose as to this
main

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main duty, which makes him to predict it unto his Son *Timothy*, *2 Tim.* 1. Now (as I said before) the great design of our Lord here, is, that his Disciples waiting for him should have grace in their hearts, a good inside as well as a Profession, as you may perceive Christ doth loudly call for a good heart, and he knew then the outside would be good also: for saith Christ, A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth that which is good.

But mistake me not, I do not in the least by what I say design to slight or undervalue Profession; but my design and aim is to arm you against degenerating into meer form, and a Carcass of Religion without the Spirit and power of it.

That state is very nauseous and offensive to Gods all-seeing Eye, who would have the Churches to know, that he is the searcher of the heart and the tryer of the reins, *Rev.* 2. 23. The Church in *Sardis* was then in her Wane, when she had a name to live and was dead, *Rev.* 3. 1, 2, 3. her fault was not that she had a name to live, but that she had the name without the nature: and what was it that gave her this name to live? was it not the form, Church Membership, Ordinances? and what was it that denominated her to be dead, but want of faith, love, zeal, yea Oyl in the lamps? had not these *Virgins* a name to live? are they not called *Virgins*, a living name, but wanted life in the Root? Had not these Servants of Christ a name to live, whilst called Christs own Servants? but they wanted love, faith, and zeal, to Christ their Lord in his business: had not these Goats a name to live? were they not clean Creatures and allowed for sacrifice? and was not a Kid of the Goat equally acceptable as a Lamb of the flock? but all these are rejected by Christ for want of life in the root.

This consideration makes me in the Subject following, spend so much time and pains in demonstrating *Sincerity* from *hypocrisie*, as you will find as you go along: Oh! *sincerity* is the life of all, a perfect heart is that which renders a weak Person although defective in many things, yet acceptable with God. Take notice of those two remarkable passages between *Ale* and *Ameriah*.

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2 *Chro.* 15. 17. though the high places were not taken away, yet the heart of *Ahaz* was perfect all his days, see the contrary 2 *Chro.* 15. 2. concerning *Amaziah*, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart. God measures men by their hearts, whether in good or evil actions; no man can keep acquaintance and fellowship with God without a perfect heart: though he may possibly keep fellowship with the Church, yet Christ knows not such, but so as to reject them with a Depart, I know you not.

My dear and Christian Friends, who are entred into the race and are aiming at the Crown; so run that ye may obtain; it is not every running will serve, neither is it the best of running will serve, if not persevered in to the end; the *Galatians* did run well, yet ceased too soon; the very best of Professors had need to set these awakening considerations before their Eyes, in this back sliding, sleeping, slumbering day, where in the best of *Virgins* if not fallen into a dead sleep, yet they slumber; they all slumbered and slept; and let the consideration of the miscarrying of the former Churches awaken us in time. What became of the seven Churches of *Asia*, and the former apostolical Churches, is not their Glory laid in the dust long ago?

Now as formality without life and power, was the very thing that prepared the Church of the Jews, Gods circumcised Church, for casting out of his presence as a dead carcase: so the same formality was the ruin of these first Churches, as we may perceive.

For this is a certain truth, that by how much the nearer any sort of Persons come to God in his worship, and yet live not up to it, it doth provoke God to the most severe proceedings against such; as for example, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, *Levit.* 10. *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, *Act.* 5. and many more; there is enough in this Chapter to awaken us to consider, Persons so near to Christ, having such boldness and confidence, yet not known by him.

To consider what a close mixture here is between these persons, all as it were of one Society, of one Family.

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Family, Christs own Servants, of one flock, till Christ
saves them.

Now our Lords great design in these Parables is
(upon pain of eternal miscarriage and disappointing-
ment;) to provoke industry and faithfulness in all
Christs Talents and intruments; and that from a
right root, that we may plainly gather if we observe:
Therefore have a special care of sloth, and negligence
in Christs service, that is greatly distasteful to him;
and consider my Friends, that there is no one grace
more acceptable to Christ and conducing more to
future profit than *Charity*, and *Alms to the Poor*: those
whom Christ hath intrusted with the Talent of this
Worlds goods, as Stewards, he expects should as need
require dispense them in his house; see how Christ
takes it in this Chapter ver. 35. *For I was an hungry*
and ye gave me meat, thirsty and ye gave me drink, naked and
ye clothed me: Christ takes it as done to his own per-
son, and is pleased to found their blessedness upon
that foundation; if any omission in these near to
Christ renders them Goats it is that they had not
fed nor clothed Christ in his Brethren, or mem-
bers.

If what I have said in my following labour may
be a means but to awaken one Person to look to his
or her standing, and examine their State for eternity;
I shall be bound to bless God for his assistance in the
work. I cannot but say I did experience some quick-
ning in my study of it, the same I desire for you in
the reading of it.

But I would not hold you too long in this Porch or
Preface; I shall refer you to the Book it self, which I
desire you to read with care and consideration; I
shall only leave Five or Six general rules as to the
work of self-examination and provision.

First, Have a special care you mistake not in the
two great fundamental points of Repentance and
Faith; for there may be a counterfeit Repentance and
Faith; see they be true of the right kind. Many
miscarry upon this mistake, thinking they have them,
when indeed they have them not,

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1. Secondly, Know this for a truth, that where one miscarries through despair, hundreds perish through presumption; which is the State of those pointed out by Christ in these Parables.

2. Thirdly, Improve present means and opportunity to get Oyle: you see there is a time when it is too late; Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, is Christs Counsel; and to such seeking is a certain promise made, see *Mat. 6. 33.*

3. Fourthly, Have a special care of too much love to present things; that is very dangerous; if any man love the World, the love of God cannot be in him; this hinders Charity; no sin so contrary to true Sainthood; a Saint is much in Heaven; *Phil. 3. 19.*

4. Fifthly, Rest not content with the measure of grace received; but add to and labour to grow in grace & Trade for Heaven; it is Gods mind that whosoever getting into Christ we should grow in him to obtain more than is given; of him much is required, as we see in this Chapter; and he that hath least must make it more; one Talent must increase to another; grace if true is communicative also to others.

6. Sixthly, Study much the near approach of the day of reckoning; it is not long at the longest before Christ will come to reckon with you; see your accounts ready against that day; that you may give your account so as that Christ may say, well done, good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee Ruler over many things; or at least, Ruler over Ten Cities.

I, Now Reader if thou meetest with any thing strange in this exposition; know this, that my design is not to impose upon the Scriptures a sense not consonant to the currant of Scriptures, nor impose upon the judgment of any man: I only humbly tender my judgment in these things, to the tryal of the unbiassed Reader.

Sam. Loveday.



To the

READER.

THE Prophets have foretold, that in the last days, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, and knowledge shall be increased. And blessed be God we see these prophecies in great measure fulfilled, though not to that degree and universal extent they shall be, but the light is growing on more and more unto the perfect day. Now among other ways and means whereby this knowledge hath been spread, the writings of the Servants of God in all ages have greatly advanced and propagated the knowledge of the truth. And they especially are to be commended who by their diligent and faithful labours have opened the Holy Scriptures unto us, that by the light thereof we may see light. Among the rest of the number of Gods faithful Servants that have employed their Talents this way, the Author of this Treatise is one, according to the Subject he hath handled. And though every word of God is pure, and highly to be prize

To the Reader..

ed, yet it must be confessed, that some portions of Holy Scripture are more useful and profitable than others. Such is the wisdom that God hath given to this Author, in directing his heart to pitch upon one of the most seasonable Subjects for the day and age we live in, The Parable of the Virgins. What can be more necessary! For the discovery of Hypocrisie, in the foolish Virgins; For the awakening of sleepy, drowsy Christians in the wise Virgins. So for the Parable of the Talents. To provoke all to a faithful improving of all the gifts and graces committed to their trust by their great Lord and Master, that when he comes again to call all his Servants to account, we may receive the reward, and enter into the joy of our Lord.

For the third and last part, concerning the eternal judgment, a Subject of all other most necessary; When there shall be a final determination of all mens estates for ever, so according to the Scriptures.

But not to prevent what is more copiously discoursed of by the Author himself in all these particulars in this Treatise.

For the manner of handling these Subjects, I shall promise thee (if thou be one that hath any taste of the most important truths contained in the Holy Scriptures,) that thou wilt find a Satisfaction running through the whole discourse, as one that sees what he first spoke, and afterwards com-

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To the Reader.

mitted unto writing, for thy souls good and profit, and indeed they are the fittest persons to treat of such Subjects as these are.- To conclude; The Author hath no other designe and end of writing this but thy spiritual edification and advantage; That thou maiest prove a wise Virgin, and so improve thy Talents, that thou maiest stand in the judgment. Which is also the sincere and hearty desire of

John Gosnold.

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BY Reason the Book was done at two Printing
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desired to take notice of, for his understanding the
Table which truly represents the matter but not the
pages. In page 232, &c. for *part read point.*

The



THE

PARABLE

Of the

Ten VIRGINS, &c.

That which first engaged my heart, and meditations to enter upon this Portion of Scripture, was these two considerations.

1. The excellent matter of instruction, that was coucht under these three Parables laid down in this Chapter; the tendancy whereof, is to provoke Christians to strict and cordial self-examination, after their inward and spiritual Estate, before it be too late.

2. The serious consideration of that Period of time which they point at; being the time a little before Christ's second coming, which we may perceive by a short view of the precedent Chapter; most of which Chapter is spent (in answer to the Disciples threefold demand) in laying down the more remote, and more immediate fore-runners of Christ's second coming. Now in this 25 Chapter we must either understand our Lord, still prosecuting the same design; in giving yet more and other predictions relating to his coming; or else we must

B

under-

2 *The Parable of the Ten Virgins, &c.*

understand him speaking of some remarkable passages, that shall fall in contemporary with those fore-named signs: And I take this latter sence to be most coherent with the scope of the whole Context; that is to say, that when the former remarkable signs and passages shall appear, and the Son of Man is near to his second coming, *ver. 30.* Then shall the State of the Church, and Professors be fitly resembled to what is set forth by these *Parables*. And to this agrees the vulgar Latin, who thus read (in that point of time,) their rendring this first word in Capitals as a remarkable period.

Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, that took their Lamps and went out to meet the Bridegroom.

The method that I shall take in managing this Subject, shall be first to open and explain those words and phrases which may seem to want explication. Secondly, I shall lay down those doctrinal conclusions, that doth naturally arise from the words so opened, and then apply the whole; and all this with brevity.

Then in that point of time, when! (according to the precedent signs,) Christs coming draws near; (*the Kingdom of Heaven.*) What may we in this Text understand by the kingdom of Heaven? (*Answer.*) According to the generality of Interpreters, kingdom of Heaven in this place is to be understood the Church, State; and so it must be understood from Christs mouth elsewhere, as *Math. 16. 19.* the words of Christ to Peter; *I gave unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, which according to the context must be understood; as also *Math. 23. 13.* in Christ's words to the Scribes and Pharisees, that shut up the kingdom of Heaven, kept

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kept persons out of the faith and Church of Christ : so must *Paul* be understood, *Col. 1. 13.* where he calleth the Church, the kingdom of Gods dear Son, into which himself and the *Colossians* were brought or translated, (*be likened*) or resembled the State of the Church in that juncture of time ; and consider, who made this comparison ? It is Jesus Christ, who was wisdom it self, who did not use to make improper comparisons, but if Christ say they are like, it is so ; and in this resemblance, our Lord hath respect to the manner of their solemnizing the Marriages in those Countrys and times, which according to History was in the Nights, and so Lamps were needful ; in which weddings, there were a choice company of young men called Sons of the Bride-chamber, and a choice and pickt company of Virgins, of the Bride kindred and acquaintance, to attend the Bridegroom at his coming ; to which it is thought *David* doth alude, *Psa. 45.* Now saith Christ, the Church State shall be a meet resemblance hereunto in that day, (*unto ten.*) The question is, what kind of number this must be ? Is this to be understood in a proper and strict sence ? (*Ans.*) We are not bound to understand this in a strict sence, precisely *ten* ; because we have by this certain number *ten*, an indefinent large and uncertain number : As for instance, *1 Sam. 1. 8.* the words of *Elkanah* to *Hannah* : *Am not I better to thee than ten Sons.* So in the *2 Sam. 19. 43.* *We have ten parts in David,* *Eccle. 7. 19.* *Wisdom strengthneth more than ten mighty men.* *Zac. 8. 23.* *Ten men shall take hold of the skirt of a Jew. Ten women shall bake in one Oven :* all which numbers are significantly to be understood of a large indefinite number, and not precisely *ten.* So here, when Christ saith *ten,* he

4 *The Parable of the ten Virgins, &c.*

must be understood as from seeing large numbers coming in at that juncture of time. But why *Virgins*? (*answ.*) by Virgins must be understood such at least who profess holiness: In worship and conversation, holy Persons are set out by this appellation, *Virgins*, such were the Church of the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 11. *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a Chast Virgin to Christ*, this is the proper epithite to Christs Spouse, Cant. 1. 2. *the Virgins love thee*, by *Virgins* sometimes is to be understood, such as have escaped the false worship of the World, as it is understood Revel. 14. 4. *These are they which are not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins*; and in this sence, the worst of these might be *Virgins*, these Persons in our Text are set forth by a fourfold Character. 1. They are called *Virgins*. 2. They are said to have Lamps or visible profession commonly understood. 3. They are said to be gone out, they are not like the Sluggard, who only wish and desire, and lie still; but these are gone out, up and doing; these are gone to seek, gone to meet. 4. They are gone to meet Christ as a Bridegroom, with some hope, joy, and expectation, as they that have an interest in him.

Having thus opened the words, I shall take notice of those observable Doctrines, that flows from the words.

1. That near to the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the kingdom is preached; many shall take upon them professed friendship to him; then shall there be ten *Virgins*, even multitudes take up profession.

2. The Church here on Earth, doth or ought to bear a resemblance to the kingdom of Heaven to come.

The Parable of the ten Virgins, &c.

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3. All that are waiting for Christ aright, are or ought to be *Virgins*.

4. Those only are wrightly waiting for Christ, who are gone forth.

5. They that go forth to meet Jesus Christ as they ought, have Lamps with them.

6. All those that are gone to meet and wait for Christ, do go to meet him as a Bridegroom.

I shall give a brief hint to each of these.

1. As to the great number of Professors, that shall come in the latter days, I have in the explication of this number *ten*, shewed you that it is taken for a large indefinit number. This was prophesied, *Esa. 60. 5. The abundance of the Sea shall be converted unto thee, and the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; ver. 8 They shall flock like Doves to the windows; Christs house will be furnished with Guests, Math. 22. 10.* Many are called, Jesus Christ did foresee that the harvest would be very great, *Math. 9. 37.* But some may object, was not this fulfilled in the beginning of the Gospel, when there were 3000 converted at one Sermon of *Peters, Acts 2.* (*1 answ.*) No, First, because those then converted were Jews, but these prophesied of, are Gentiles; and Secondly, this plentiful flowing in, is contemporary with those signs and immediate fore-runners of Christs coming. *Ch. 24.*

Now that which shall occasion this large flowing in, in that juncture of time; may be these circumstances:

First, From that great increase of light, that shall break out in that Day, which was prophesied of by the Prophet *Daniel, Chap. 12. 4. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledg shall be increased;* which doth refer to that time, a. we may perceive by the

6 *The Parable of the ten Virgins, &c.*

Context. We read also of an Angel coming down from Heaven, by whose means the Earth is enlightened, *Rev. 18. 1.* the first fruit whereof we see in our days.

Secondly, These may arise from the great noise of Christs second coming, which shall be made more than formerly, which shall awaken many and cause them to run forth: The Doctrin of the latter days near Christs second coming will run much upon this Subject; this was foreseen by *Malachy, Chap. 3* as we may also gather out of the Book of the *Revelations*.

Thirdly, those dreadful and amazing dispensations of God, that shall take place in the latter days, when those signs spoken of *Math. 24. Luk. 21.* shall begin to come to pass; *this shall make all the Tribes of the Earth to mourn, Math. 24. 30. Luk. 21. 25, 26.* Mens hearts failing at the sight here-

From hence we may be informed, that we are upon the borders of the latter days, we have not only seen some forerunners of Christs coming in other respects, but we have in some part seen this also; great numbers of persons have flowed in, in these 20 years past much more than formerly. So much for the first Doctrin.

The second is drawn from this appellation kingdom of Heaven, Christ doth not inconsiderately, but with good consideration so call it. From whence I draw the second part, That the Church of Christ here on Earth, ought to bear a lively resemblance of the State of glory, and that in four Circumstances.

1. From their compactness, the Church of Christ are

are imbodyed together and compact, we have this very word used, *Eph. 4. 16.* Speaking there of the Church, saith it is *compact*; as the Natural Body is, so is this therefore called a *city*, *Ephe. 2. Fellow Citizens of the Saints*, so the glory to come called a *City*, *Heb. 11. 10.* ver. 16. *He hath prepared for them a City*, *1 Pet. 2. 5. Built up a spiritual house.*

2. The Church resembles the State of glory in that purity and holiness there ought to be in it, or members of it, *Plas. 93. 5. Holiness becometh thy house for ever*; the Church is as to holiness, stiled *Golden Candlesticks*, which answers to the State of Glory, in which no unclean thing shall enter.

3. The Church on Earth bears a meet resemblance to the State of Glory, and may be called here by Christ the kingdom of Heaven, because as Christ is King and Lawgiver, in that kindom of Glory; so Christ is King and Lawgiver to his Church, *James 4. 12. One Lawgiver.*

4. As Christ will be resident in his kingdom with his Saints, he shall then dwell amongst them. *Rev. 22. 3. The Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell amongst them*; so in the Church the Lord hath promised to walk and dwell amongst them, *2. Cor. 6. 16. He walketh amongst the Churches under the name of Golden Candlesticks*, *Rev. 1.* Thus the Church bears a resemblance with the Kingdom of Glory, and the Church is the Porch or entrance into Glory; according to *Acts 2. last, The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* This consideration well weighed, may serve to provoke holiness in the Church of Christ, both in Ministers and members it is prophesied, as to the State of the Church to come. *Esa. 63. 21. the people shall be all righteous*; that we are sure will be a holy time, a

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holy state ; and without holiness no man shall see God, *Heb. 12. 14.* You that are Church members, labour after holiness ; if you arrive not at holiness here, you shall never have it hereafter ; the truth of this Doctrin is confirmed by the third Doctrin which I shall only name.

3. *Doct.* That all that truly wait for Christ , are or ought to be *Virgins* : I have already shewed you in the explication, what is intended by Christ in this appellation ; they that the Scripture gives this appellation to or name of *Virgins*, unto such as are holy Persons. First as to a blameless holy conversation, Secondly, Such as are separate from false worship, as I shewed you from *Rev, 14. 4.* but I proceed to the fourth doctrine which is this.

4. *Doct.* That all that truly wait for Christ are gone forth, they are raised from their Bed of carnal security: The Apostle writing to the *Hebrew Church*, Chap. 13. 13. doth emphatically call their sufferings for Christ, going forth ; *Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* The Spouse of Christ, *Cant. 3. 1. 2.* while she seeks Christ upon her Bed, found him not ; she must arise and go forth to seek her beloved, whom her Soul loves ; this going forth supposeth a sequestration in a great measure, from earthly enjoyments, and this the Prophet *Joel* calls for, *Joel, 2. 16. Let the Bridegroom go out of his chamber, and the Bride out of her Closet* in order to seeking God : that is, from their lawul enjoyments ; this going forth supposeth love to, and desire after what we go forth after, *Cant. 3. 11. Go ye forth (O) ye Daughters of Sion and behold King Solomon.* Sometimes to go forth supposeth strength and vigour, *Job. 24. 5. Psal. 104. 24. Man goeth forth to his labour and to work till evening,*
and

and (eminent is that Propheſie of) *Mal.* Chap. 4.
2. *Ye ſhall go forth and grow up as Calves of the Stall.*
Now when it is ſaid here in this Parable, they went
forth, it ſuppoſeth a going forth with ſelf-denial,
with leaving in a meaſure their lawful enjoynments,
their false worſhip, and this with ſome love and de-
ſire, ſtrength and vigor to meet Chriſt.

Uſe, From all which learn this inſtruction; ſee
how far the fooliſh *Virgins* accompany the wiſe
Virgins, whiſt it is indefinitely ſaid they went out,
theſe did not only come in but go forth to meet the
Bridegroom.

5 *Doct.* Was this, That thoſe truly gone forth to
meet Jeſus Chriſt have or ought to have Lamps; they
took their Lamps, elſe they had no ways benefit to
go forth upon this deſign; Lamps were abſolutely
neceſſary for this expedition, a veſſel to contain the
Oyl: And theſe are not blamed that they took their
Lamps, for although there are ſome that have Lamps
and no ſupply of Oyl, yet we find not any that have
Oyl and no Lamp: we have a generation in our
days, that would pretend to have Oyl and no Lamp,
the power of godlineſs without a form; this cannot
be, although a Perſon may have a form and not the
power, yet none we read of that have the power
without the form, it is commendable to have Lamps:
The Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* exhorts them to hold
faſt their profeſſion, which lay in a viſible mainte-
nance of the inſtitutions of Chriſt, together with a
good converſation; the fooliſh *Virgins* were right
ſo far, they took their Lamps.

I ſhall only commend this advice to you from
this Doctrin; Do not ſuppoſe grace in your hearts,
love to Chriſt in your hearts, ſo long as it doth not
appear in your lives and profeſſions *David* would
not

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not hide his righteousness in his heart, *Psal.* 49. 7. but he maketh it to shine forth to the benefit of others: You that pretend you are gone forth to meet Christ, where are your Lamps? Remember those *2 Tim.* 3. are not blamed that they have a form of godliness, but they were blamed for not having the power so much for the fifth Doctrin.

6. *Doct.* The sixth Doctrin respects their end and interest to meet him as a Bridegroom with joy and encouragement, as being related to Christ, as Christ being their friend, this going to meet Christ, supposeth love and respect to Christ: When *Lot* went forth to meet the Angels, it was for that respect *Lot* had to them, *Gen.* 19. 1. When *Joseph* went to meet his Father, it was from that love and respect he had to his Father, *Gen.* 46. 29. And thus the Lord is said to meet him that rejoyce and worketh, this is manifest love, affection, *Esa.* 64. 5. From the same ground the Disciples went to meet *Paul*, *Act.* 28. 15. So that the *Virgins* going forth to meet Christ, supposeth their love and respect to Christ. Secondly, to meet a Person, implies the forwardness and desire of the meeter to enjoy the company of the Person met, his desire of fruition is such, that he cannot sit still till he comes to him; thus the *Harlot* discovered the desire of the fruition of her prey, *Prov.* 7. 15. She went to meet him, she was not content to sit still till he came to find her out. Now from these considerations, we cannot imagine these to be gross wicked Persons, who are thus gone out to meet Christ in this sence; neither can they be thought to be such as were to be condemned in themselves, or of those who would be hidden from the face of Christ, according to *Revelations* the sixth, these that thus

go forth to meet Christ, must needs have some confidence and hopes of acceptance with him, and therefore could come boldly as we see afterwards, with Lord, Lord open to us, as in *ver. 11.*

There are a generation of men that shall have great confidence, Living, Dying, and Rising, and yet at the last suffer disappointment; and yet their confidence is so great, that Christ can hardly bear them off from it, at the Judgment day, *I tell you I know you not, I profess I know you not,* It seemeth as if they were hardly prevailed with, to let lose their hold; but of that more hereafter.

We see in our Text the foolish goe along with the wise, have the same outward profession, and declare the same affection, soe far as man could see, so they go forth to meet Christ and that as a Bridegroom. Nay if we take in that parallel place, *Mat. 22. They are come into the marriage Chamber, and yet without the wedding Garment;* and these foolish could not be discerned, by their fellows and companions, so neither could these in the wedding Chamber, the Porter could not discern this want of a Wedding Garment, till the King came to see the guests and then a discovery is made, and not before.

May not these considerations put Professors upon a serious and deep examination of themselves, how it stands with them as to their souls estate, for it may easily be imagined, that the whole difference lay within, and not without; this Wedding Garment must be understood to be Inward sincerity, that which God only can see and Judge of; I shall handle this more fully afterwards in its place, yet I shall so far anticipate the matter, as to speak a few words here by way of application.

We

We have in this Parable vast numbers thus accommodated with Lamps and set forwards, is not the case ours in this day? are there not vast numbers of Professors now? and according to this Parable, may not half of them be Foolish, and yet no defect appearing outwardly? methinks this should awaken us, to look about us.

Give me leave to lay down some cautions, which I pray you take notice of on the Negative: First, do not trust to hearing, though Christs words many deceive themselves, whilst they are hearers and not doers, see the 1 *James* 22. Many think they are safe because they are hearers, this you shall see afterwards, is one of the false grounds of the Foolish Virgins, hearing will not do, for there we hear of people *Zek. 33. 31, 32.* who were hearers, *And they come to thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an Instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.* They came and sate as Gods people used to do, and this is pleaded *Math. 7.* we have them preach in our Streets. Secondly, do not trust to bare faith in the Son of God, that is, to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, such a faith those must needs have, who cast out Devils in Christs name. if a faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God will do, the whole nation have it, nay the Devils confess Christ to be the Son of God. Thirdly, do not trust to thy confidence of acceptance with God, for this they had. Fourthly, do not trust to obedience to Christs Instructions,

ons, these *Virgins* could not want this. Fifthly, do not trust to your keeping clear from false worship, this they had, or else they could not have bourn the name of *Virgins*. Sixthly, do not trust to thy waiting and desiring for Christs coming, this they had; and we read of a people that desired the day of the Lord, as in *Amos* 5. 18. which should be to them a day of darkness and not of light; these *Virgins* were gone out to meet the Bridegroom, therefore trust to none of those.

But then may some say object, what shall we then trust unto, if not in these six evidences of a sure and safe estate? *Answer.* First, when this consideration increaseth, so doth thy holiness increase, these in our Text were workers of iniquity, for all their confidence, true faith, and hope of salvation, is attended with a gradual purifying life, as you may see in 1 *John* 3 Chap. 3. *Every man that hath this hope, purifieth himself even as he is pure.* Secondly, when thou art strict in thy thoughts and affections, as well as in thy words and actions, so was St. Paul, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. *casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowl:dg of God, and bringing into captivity, every thought to the obedience of Christ,* So also *Acts* 24. 16. *he exercised himself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and Man.* Thirdly, when secret communion with God, is thy desire and delight in all duties performed, and at all times, *John* 1. 3. *that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* Fourthly, when the visits of the Spirit maketh thee more humble; thus it was with the Prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. 6. 5 *Then said*

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said I, woe unto me, for I am undone, for I
am a man of unclean Lips, and dwell among ather
people of unclean Lips; for mine eyes have seen a ne
the King, the Lords of Hosts, The sight of God hum-
bleth him. Fifthly, when thou hast a dear love
to and a delight in the Brethren; such as ex-
cel in vertue, such a one was David. Psal. 16. 3d
But to the Saints that are in the Earth, and to the
excellent in whom is my delight. Though poor and
indigent, Sixthly, when thou hast a Spirit of
sectet prayer, upon all occasions thou canst pour
out thy soul to God, when no Eye sees thee, and
no Ear hears thee; thus much for the first verse.

We now proceed to the second, and third, and
 fourth verse, *and five of them were wise, and five of*
them Foolish, 3d ver. they that were foolish took
their Lamps, and took no Oyl with them. 3d ver. but
the wise took Oyl in their Vessels with their Lamps,
 in which three Verses we have a particular and dis-
 tinct description of those Persons spoken of Verse
 1 As to the number, and as to the nature of the
 qualifications those *Ten Virgins*, ver. 1. are divided
 into two parts, five Wise and five Foolish. Se-
 condly, we have the difference of these Ten, in
 verse the second, the Foolish had some Oyl for their
 present use, the Wise had a Vessel or Bottle con-
 taining a stock for future supply to their Lamps, in
 case of delay in the Bridegrooms coming, that the
 Lamp might be kept burning: The whole is a Para-
 ble beareth a double acceptation in the Scripture.
 First, sometimes a Parable is understood a great wise
 sentence, that hath power in it to rule and sway the
 understanding. It signifies to govern as a Prince. Se-
 condly, Sometimes it is taken to make like; and so a
 Parable in this place must be understood a similitude.

Christ

Christ in his wisdom seeth these two to resemble each other, these ingage in the circumstances thereof, bear a near parity, and likeness to the State of Professors in the latter days, near to Christs second coming: But why five Foolish, when Christ on the like occasion findeth a Man *Math. 22. 11.* without a Wedding Garment: by five we are not to understand two or three precisely, but as to signifie a very large and indifferent number; so five is to be understood of many together in the external part of Religion, yet many of them are bad, unwise, and shall be shut out. But why nere half, and in *Math. 22. 11.* a Man only, intimating a small part? *Ans.* It is spoken of a Man to set forth the omnipotency of God, that can find out one Man in such a Throng, and can draw him out; but in our Text, it is spoken as it is in it self considered to us-wards. But now for application. First, What is the Oyl? Secondly, What is the Vessel? The learned tell us, that the word translated Oyl, is the same word that signifies Light and Noon-day, sometimes by Oyl is comprehended all good things, or the best of things, as *Prov. 21. 20. There is Treasure to be desired, and Oyl in the House of the wise; but a foolish Man he spendeth it up.*

There is desirable Treasure and Oyl in the House of the wise; and Job meaneth when he saith the Rocks poured him out Oyl is all good things comprehensively understood; as in *Hosea 2.* God nameth Flax an Oyl as the two only things.

Secondly, sometimes under Oyl is set forth, as in *Deut 7. 13.* also *Josel 3. 1.* compared with *Prov. 21. 17. He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: He that loveth wine and Oyl shall not be Rich.* Thirdly. By Oyl sometimes is understood the spirit

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rit of God, as that which is spoken of *Aaron* and *Christ*, *Psal.* 44. 7. *thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of Gladness above thy Fellows.* He is so to be anointed with the Oyl of gladness above his Fellows, which must intend the Spirit of God, the foolish had some of this Oyl, not a stock in the heart. Secondly, What is here understood by the Vessel? *I answ.* Sometimes by Vessel is understood the whole man, as in *2 Cor.* 4. 7. *but we have this treasure in Earthen Vessels;* that is, weak Man, in this sence the Woman is said to be the weaker Vessel, that is Person; but by Vessel in this place must be understood the heart, because it is supposed to the visibility of profession: And in that sence it is to be understood *1 Thes.* 4. 4. *that every one of you shall know how to possess his Vessel in sanctification and honour,* that is, the Vessel that is applied is life, *Prov.* 4. 23. *keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* We have in these words five Doctrinal conclusions which are as follows. First, That hypocrisie and sincerity rightly understood, is wisdom and folly, five wise, and five foolish. Secondly, That among the multitude of Professors that shall be in the last days, there are many bad formal Hyppocrites and unwise, who shall never possess what they seem to be pursuing. Thirdly, Bad and good men meet, Assemble and go along together in the outward external part of Religion; these all have Lamps alike, and went together as *David* Prophesied of *Judas* in *Psal.* 55. 13. *my Familiar that went with me to the House of God in Company, that eat Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel against me.* Four hly That the grea distinguishing of one truly and spi

ritual

ritually wise, lyeth in the heart, one wants it, the other hath it in his heart. Fifthly, that true Spiritual Profession is then in his right order when it is the product of the heart; or thus, Spiritually Wise Persons are such whose Lips and lives are supplied from the heart. Of these in order, not truly, thoroughly, to provide for time to come is folly in this sense, all sin is folly, and all righteousness is wisdom in Solomons Language; Fools makes a mock of sin, Fools they lay not up for afterwards, those Solomon sendeth to the Sluggard to the Ant, *Prov. 6. 6. Go to the Ant thou Sluggard, consider her ways and be wise*, Solomon telleth us that wisdom excelleth folly, as much as light excelleth darkness, and how doth he decipher this wisdom, the wise man can see, his Eyes are in his head.

The Use of Instruction from hence, First that all sinful people are unwise people, though Gods own people see *Dent. 32. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise, is not he thy Father that hath bought thee, hath he not made thee and established thee*, Oh foolish and unwise: a Person not rich in Spirituals is a Fool in Christs Language. *Luk. 12. 21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God*: A Fool is set out under three Characters.

First, He knoweth not what is good in it self, a Swine trampleth upon Pearls.

Secondly, If he doth at any time see or know, yet he hath no heart to lay hold of that which is good, he hath a prize but no heart to it, *Prov. 17. 16.*

Thirdly, He knoweth not what is good for himself, he refuseth that which is best and chooseth that which is worst for him, though he think he is

wise, yet he is a Fool, *Psal. 49. 13. This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings*: he is like the Beast; there is some men carry it as if they had engroft all the wisdom in the world to themselves; yet when it is too late, shall see they are Fools, *Wisd. 5. 4. we Fools count their lives madness, and their ends without Honour. A word hence, First to those without, Secondly to those within:*

First to those without: Learn to have another and higher esteem of Wisdom, remember the truly wise Person is he that provideth for the longest time to come, this is wisdom in Christ's account, *Math. 7. 24. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise Man which built his house upon a Rock.*

Secondly know this, that true wisdom is to depart from sin, for he is the only wise Man that departs from evil, that flies from sin as from a Serpent, *Job 28. 28. And unto Man he said, behold the fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*

Secondly as to those within, to poor weak Persons, that think themselves unwise and thereupon are under discouragements; art thou one of those that have laid up the word of God in thy heart: be of good comfort this is true wisdom, if thou art also found doing of his Commandments from the heart: And know that the wise shall inherit Glory, when shame shall be the promotion of Fools, as in *Prov. 3. 35.*

Secondly, Have a special care of placing your wisdom in your obedience to the external parts of Religion, this was the evil of the foolish Virgins.

Now

Now to the second Doctrin, That there will be many bad Professors and Church-Members in the latter days, five foolish *Virgins*. I might in this Point have an Eye to Gods antient people in their declined State, but I need not, *Jerem. 5. 26. For among my People are found wicked Men.* But the truth of this Doctrin will appear by what Christ teacheth in the Parable of the Drag-net cast into the Sea, which intendeth, the Gospel-Ministry it gathereth bad and good, so all the Churches, *Romans, Ephesians, colossians*, and the seven Churches of *Asia*, five in seven, blame-worthy, so in the *2 Tim. 3. 5.* Persons very bad, yet holding a form of godliness, but what need I look so far back, our days confirm this truth too fully, and whence it ariseth.

First, From that light that breaketh forth.

Secondly, From the hardness of the work, as sins Crucifying throughout Godliness.

Thirdly, It ariseth from Satans more than ordinary industry in the latter days to deceive.

Take an *Use* of Caution from this head, first have a special care of condemning profession it self, because there are so many bad under it, and in it. Christs little Church consisting of but twelve, had one bad, even a Son of perdition: consider the Church of the *Corinthians 1 Epistl. 5. 6.* had very bad Members in it. Many men are apt to take advantage from this consideration to keep off from Profession, but know that the Profession is true and good, though bad men may take it up that will not excuse disobedience to the form of Doctrin.

But I shall hasten to the third Doctrin, That Hypocrites, formal Professors and bad Members may meet, and match, go along with the wisest and best in the external part of Religion, this Point I shall

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not insist upon because it seemeth to border upon the former, the truth of this Doctrin, is abundantly true, if we look into the Old Testament sacrifices, fastings, solemn meetings, the worst was as forward as the best and the Lord had no cause to blame them as to that, as you may read *Psal.* 50. 8. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or burnt offerings to have been continually before me,* and further in *Isaiah* 58. 2. compared with *Isaiah* 1. 11. they sate before him as his people, as in *Ezekiel* 33. 31. the Hypocrites in Christs time were found in three choice duties at least in the outward part, as Prayer, Fasting, Alms, as in *Math.* 6. and the first six ver, thus I pass this third Doctrin.

And now we come to the fourth Doctrin, which was this, That the great distinguishing Character that discovereth the wise from the foolish Professor, it lyeth in the heart, the wise had Oyl in their Vessels, besides what was in their Lamps; which Vessel must be understood the heart as I have shewed before, if we look under the Law ever since God had a People or Church upon the earth in the time of the Circumcision, here lay the difference, some were Circumcised in the flesh, and others in heart, some only Circumcised in the flesh, but none of them were acceptable to God, but those Circumcised in heart; he only had praise of God, as you may read in *Rom* 2. 28, 29. *For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is of God, and not of Men.* Here lay the difference between *Asa* and *Amasiab*, as you may see comparing 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. with the 25 of the same

Book and the 2 ver. of *Asa* we thus read, *But the high places were not taken away out of Israel; nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days*, and of *Amaziah* we thus read, *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*. In *Asa's* time the high places were not pulled down, yet *Asa's* heart was perfect with God all his days; *Amaziah* did many good things, and things right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart; *David* thought he had some swellings from God in outward matters, yet he had a clean heart, *Psal. 73 1. Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart*, and God beareth him testimony that his heart was perfect with him: but some may object.

Object. Doth not this take us from judging men by their actions?

I ansr. This Text doth not so much respect persons profane in life, as Hypocrites in Profession, for those loose in their lives, cannot be said to have Lamps as these, and consequently some light which according to Christ *Math. 5. 13.* the fruit of good works, a constant corrupt life is inconsistent with a good or clean heart, *David* might be overtaken with a strong temptation and yet his heart clean, but if he had fallen into a course and series of sins, he could not.

Use the first, The Use of this Doctrine, if this be so that the great distinguishing Character lyeth in the heart, then this doth inform us how we are to estimate all our actions of obedience doing and sufferings, take notice how far the heart is in it, and that for this reason, because that Gods eye and estimate is there, his eye is upon the heart, as in *1 Sam. 16. 7. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth.*

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for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart, a truly godly man had rather have a defect in his life than in his heart, therefore David prayeth God to search his heart and try it, and to see if there were any way of wickedness that he would purge it out, and prayeth hard that God would create in him a clean heart, an renew a right Spirit in him, *Psal* 51. 10.

Second Use. Have a care of passing sentence upon the outward appearance, for if we do so, we may sometimes pass unrighteous Judgment; therefore it is Prophesied of Christ as his prerogative, that he shall not Judg according to the sight of his Eye, but he shall Judg righteous Judgment, as in *Isaiah* 11. 4.

Third Use. Thirdly, let this serve for Caution to us not to trust to our own hearts: *Solomon* saith he that trusteth to his own heart is a Fool, and *Jerem.* 17. 9. *The heart of man is deceitful and desperately bent to wickedness, who can know it.* *Hekiah* did not know his own heart, as you may read *2 Chron.* 32. 31. *God leste him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart,* but I shall now proceed to the fifth Doctrin.

Fifth Doctrin, That a truly Spiritual wise Professor is one who possesseth a stock of grace within, that he may supply his Lamp without; he doth not only profess but possess, or this Professor is then in his right frame or order, when it is the fruit and product of the heart. It may be said of a truly wise Professor, as *Bildad* speaketh to *Job*, in *Job* 8. 10. where he counselleth him to inquire of the aged and experienced Person, they (saith he) shall speak words out of their hearts, that is their own experience, which they have laid up there; as

one

one faith, the difference between a wise man and a foolish man is, the Fools heart is in his Mouth, but the wise mans Mouth is in his heart; he speaketh from his heart, he keepeth something in whereas the other utters all at once, the wise are like *David Psal. 45. 1. My heart is enditing a good matter, I speak of the things which I have made, touching the King, my tongue shall be as the Pen of a ready writer,* to this Solomon speaketh much, see *Prov. 11. 33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding, but that which is in the midst of Fools is made known:* also the 15. 2. and the 16. 23. *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his steps,* and after the same Language Christ speaketh in *Math. 12. 35. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things,* so in *Luk. 6. 42. you have the same matter,* it may be said of a truly wise Professor in all his obedience, as it is said of those *Romans in Ch. 6. v. 17. They obeyed from the heart the form of Doctrine delivered unto them. In all he doth, in sufferings he doth it from the heart, his prayers, alms, fastings, and then God taketh it exceeding well when it proceedeth from the heart; see Exod. 35. 21. compared with the 25. and the 29. it is here exprest five times for their commendations, that they did what they did with a willing heart, all the rest God taketh little notice of again, read Judg. 5. 9. My heart is towards the Governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people, Abrahams heart was accepted in offering up Isaac, herein the wise Virgins had something that the foolish had not, whereby they could bear*

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a delay ; and notwithstanding their drowiness could recruit again out of this treasury , such a wise stockt Person is as *David* was, assoon as he is awake he is with God, as in *Psal.* 139. 18. which well minded must relate to this as also *Psal.* 73. I am still with thee ; assoon as he is awake out of his temptation, the wise *Virgins* are like the good ground that had depth of earth, the stony ground like the foolish.

Now we come to the use of the Doctrin, and first the consideration hereof may put Christians very much upon the work of inquiry how the case stands with them, and it is a Christians duty to examine, it was *Paul's* exhortation to the Church of *1 c Corinthian* 2 Epist. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you except you be Reprobates ?* try whether the root of the matter be in you, try by these Rules.

First, Hast thou a true love to Christ in all duties of obedience unto him, as *1 John* 5. 4. his Commandments are not grievous.

Secondly, Art thou afflicted, at thy coolings and straglings of heart, as well as sins of life, so that thou canst not rest in that condition,

Thirdly, Thou mayest know it by the bowing of thy heart to God in every dispensation, whether affliction or prosperity, both draweth to God it did so with *David*.

Fourthly, Thou hast a clean heart, no sin lodgeth there, the pure in heart shall see God.

We come now to the fifth verse, *While the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept*, in this Verse we have contained a Prophetical relation of the state and condition of the many Professors
or

or *Virgins*, in the interval of time between the general going forth to meet the Bridegroom and his real and absolute Coming, called here the Bridegroomes tarrying, that is, tarried longer then they expected, they all slumbered and slept; there had been a great noise of Christs second coming, a little before, whereupon many went out to meet him, and they waited a while and he came not, whereupon they laid down again, neglected their watch and fell asleep. It hath been much the case of the Christians in *England*; but according to my promise I shall be brief in the prosecution of this Chapter, I shall open the words and so proceed to those Doctrines observable.

Here are four words to be opened,

First, Who is this Bridegroom.

Secondly, What or when is the time of their tarrying.

Thirdly, Who are the all here.

Fourthly, What is this slumbering and sleeping.

First, By Bridegroom here, must needs be understood to be Jesus Christ, it is so understood in the scope of this Parable and other Scriptures.

Secondly, This tarrying must be understood tarrying according to our apprehension; and notionally doth the slothful Servant, and those *Virgins*, and those Mockers spoken of in 2 *Pet.* 3. 8. Judge Christ to tarry or delay: but we may see that the true Spouse of Christ apprehends no less as we may perceive by the scope of *Solomons* Song.

Thirdly, By all.

I ans^r. By all must be understood both wise and foolish, those that had Oyl as well as those that had none, as well those that had it in their Vessels as the rest, only there is a difference between a poor and

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and a rich man sleeping, a rich man as we may say can better bear it, though the wise sleep yet they have a stock, though they sleep, yet their heart is awake, as in *Cant.* 5. 2.

Fourthly, *what is this slumbring and sleeping?*

Ans. It cannot be intended a natural sleep, but this sleeping beareth a clear resemblance with natural sleep, a Spiritual sleeping is a general ceasing from all action, and motion; *while the Bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept*, we have three Doctrines in these words.

First, That Jesus Christ in his second coming, cometh under the consideration and relation of a Bridegroom, to his Church and people.

Secondly, That Jesus Christ the Churches Bridegroom, seemeth in her apprehension to be slow in his motion in his second coming.

Thirdly, That the great prevailing evil in the latter days amongst the highest Professors is slumbring and sleeping, a drowsie frame attends Professors in the latter days,

The first Doctrin, That Jesus Christ in his second coming comes to his Church and people as a Bridegroom; in the management of which Doctrin I shall endeavour these four things.

First, Prove this Doctrin from other Scriptures.

Secondly, Shew you what is wrapt up under this consideration and relation to the Spouse of Christ.

Thirdly, Lay down some discovering Characters of those Persons who may comfortably expect Christ as their Bridegroom.

Fourthly, apply the whole.

First, That Christ shall come as a Bridegroom to his Church and people, is prophesied of and held out in Scriptures elsewhere, see *Isaiah* 62. 5.

For

For as a young man marryeth a Virgin, so shall thy Sons marry thee; and as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee: that is, (say some) thy Ministers or thy Magistrates shall marry thee to God, our old reading is this, so shall God marry himself to thy Sons; and if we mind the scope it cannot intend no less, see the next words, as the Bridegroom rejoiceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee; the State of the Church is a State of Marriage; this (may some say) was as to the State of the Jews in their return.

I answ. It is more general: See what the Apostle St. Paul saith in 2 Cor. 11. 2. *For I am jealous over you with Godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I might present you a chaste Virgin to Christ:* so also in the 5. 30. we have the same relation owned to them, and this is plain. *Revel. 19. 7. Let us be glad and rejoyce and give honour to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made her self ready,* so also see the Verses after the Text.

Secondly, But what doth this relation carry in it to the Saints who are concerned in it? first in general it must needs be a very blessed day; suppose it a day when a poor Drudge or Slave were to be Married to a Gentleman of a vast Estate, with dear love and affections on his side, nay to a Prince, doth not the thoughts of such a change with such advancement raise and satisfie her concerned, nay ravish her heart with unspeakable joy, it breaks her sleep, what more particularly is contained in this consideration; there are in this Marriage six priviledges which must needs render it a most blessed state to the true Spouse of Christ.

First, It is a day of clearing all doubts, dissolving

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ing all fears of breaking off, or miscarriages, or disappointments, we know according to the metaphor in wooing time, there remains abundance of uncertainty in the state.

If a *Virgin* have a good proffer, or one commeth to gain her love, yet how often doth breaches happen in that state? nay some after they are made sure as we (call it) leave each other, and if they are worth having, what fears and doubts possesseth the heart thereupon? Oh! how fearful is the woman that he should take distast and leave her, insomuch as those who look on (or themselves) cannot tell whether it will be a Match or no; now therefore there is no way to secure all, but by Marriage: that puts all out of doubt, so in this Case this day of Christs second coming, to such as are sincere: it dissolveth all their doubts and fears, and according to the worthiness of the Match, so are these fears desires and satisfactions augmented; this Marriage day must needs be a day of blessed consequence, therefore St. Pauls care for the *Corinthians* was that he might present them to Christ, he is not at rest in his thoughts concerning them, though they were Elpoused, yet afraid least Satan should occasion a breach, so as not to enjoy the Marriage as in 2 Cor. II. 2. The same care he had for the *Colossians* I. 28. *whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.*

Secondly, This Marriage day is the day of manifestation of love, wooing time is a time of secret love, few can take notice of that, few knoweth that there is such love between them; it doth not appear what love God beareth to his Spouse: before, nay they themselves do not many times know it, there-

therefore that day is called the day of the manifestation of the Sons of God, as in *Rom. 8. 19.* For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God, and this manifestation is promised to them that overcome, as in *Rev. 3. 9.* *Shall know that I have loved thee.*

Thirdly, A day of very great honour. The Apostle saith *Heb. 13. 4.* That Marriage is honourable, and if any Marriage be honourable this must be so, very honourable in respect to the Spouse, here is riches and honour and rule wherewith she is indowed, Jesus Christ doth instate her into that glory and rule that himself hath, see *Revel. 3. 21.* *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit down with me in my Throne; even as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*

Fourthly, It is a day of great splendor and glory as to Ornaments, she that hath lain among the Pots shall now be covered over with yellow Gold, *Psal. 68. 13.* *Though ye have lain among the Pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a Dove, cover'd with Silver, and her feathers with yellow Gold,* she shall be glorious and splended in her apparel as Christ shall be, see *Isaiah 63. 1.* *Who is this that cometh from Edom with died Garments from Bozrah?* this that is glorious in his apparel; travelling in the greatness of his strength, I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save, so shall she be as in *Psal. 45. 13, 14.* *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought Gold, she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of Needle-works; the Virgins her companions shall be brought unto thee, and so likewise in Rev. 19. 8.* compare that with the 21. 2. *And I John saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as*

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a Bride adorned for her Husband; we know wedding Cloaths are Ornamental in publick Weddings.

Fifthly, It will be a day of publick and unspeakable joy, not only within but without; we know great joy with Instruments of musick attends Weddings, the Prophet *Jerem. 7. 34.* setteth out time of joy by the voice of the Bridegroom, and the Bride; it is usuel in those Feasts to have great joy outward and inward, as you may see in *Isaiah 62. 5.* compared with *Zephaniah 3. 17.* *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save thee, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing;* that this day of Christs second personal coming, will be a day of great joy, we may gather from our Lords words in *Mathew 9. 15.* compared with *Mark 2. 19.* *Can the Children of the Bride-Chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? No, it is improper, see John 16. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoyce, and your joy shall no man take from you. So in Revel. 19. 7. Let us be glad, and rejoyce, and give honour to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready.*

Sixthly, It shall put a compleat universal and perpetual end to all sorrow this day occasions, a compleat deliverance from sorrow, all tears shall be wiped away from all faces, see *Isaiah 35. 10.* *And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, compare that with Isaiah 51. 11. also 65. 19. And I will rejoyce in Jerusalem, and joy in my people, and the voice of weeping*

weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying, all sorrow shall flee away: These are the Priviledges attending this Bridegrooms coming.

Quest. But who may wait comfortably for this day with good hope?

I answer in six particulars.

First, Those that know and are acquainted with Jesus Christ, it is altogether necessary that those that expect Marriage one from another, are acquainted and intimately acquainted with each other; if thou dost not know Christ, it is in vain to expect Marriage to him, for his coming will be to thee as before; to know Christ is a matter of great concernment, See *John 17. 3.* *And this is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent:* It is life eternal to know him, to know his Name, his Nature, his Estate, his Glory and Dignity, that he is the Son of God.

Secondly, Such as are satisfied in the love of Christ may thus expect him with comfort, it is necessary that thou knowest that he loves thee, in order to this Marriage: and not only that he loves thee, but that thou lovest him, and indeed it is a sure way to know that Christ loveth us, if we love him, as in *Pro. 8. 17.* *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.* This was also eminent in the Church, *Cant. 2. 4.* *He brought me to the Banqueting house, and his banner over me was love;* she seeth his Bed or Chariot paved with love, as in *Can. 3. 10.* *He made the Pillars thereof of Silver, the bottom thereof of Gold, the covering of it of Purple; the midst thereof being paved with love for the Daughters of Jerusalem,* and in *Cant. 7. 10.* *she concludeth that she is her beloved's, and that his desire is towards her, this she is sensible of, this she feeds upon,*

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upon, that her beloved loveth her, this St. John is sensible of, 1 John 4. 19. *we love him because he loved us first.*

Thirdly, Those who may expect Christ with comfort; must be such as are sure to him, such as are Espoused to Christ, as in 2 Cor. 11 2. *For I have Espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ,* thou canst remember a time when Christ and thou were made sure, (as I may so call it) a Match concluded I am my beloved and he is mine, and each member can say the same; Marriage is but a publick Solemnizing, what before was more privately agreed: It is said of Joseph the supposed Father of Christ, that they were Espoused before Marriage, as in Math. 1. 8. They were Espoused before they came together, and we know it is usual so to do; now is Christ and thou contracted, thou art in a hopeful way then to Marriage, thou art the person that Christ comes to as a Bridegroom, his coming is thy Marriage-day.

Fourthly, Such as have experience here of a constant intercourse between Christ and them, at a distance; Letters use to pass between lovers between Espousals and Marriage, there use to pass Letters of intimate love and affections, heart loves out goings, there is a communion in Spirit, in Prayer, Reading, Hearing, in Ordinances, that was St. Johns state 1 John 1. 4. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.* Those that are sure to each other do not use to cease writing to each other, or visiting till Marriage day; and thy thoughts have been running out after him, as his after thee.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Such as may expect Christ as a Bridegroom, are such as look and long for his coming, for this Marriage day, as in *Heb. 9. 28.* So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin to salvation : So also the Spouse of Christ, *Cant. 8. 14.* Make hast my beloved ; and be thou like to a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices ; so saith John, *Revel. 22. 20.* Surely I come quickly, Amen, Even so come Lord Jesus.

Sixthly, Such as are preparing and making ready for such a marriage, getting Garments futable ; is it like that a poor Maid can be married to a Prince in her old and own cloaths ? no, Christ will have those that he is married to , to have all new, as in *Rev. 19. 8.* And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine Linnen, clean and white ; for the clean Linnen is the righteousness of Saints.

The Use. I have two words from hence,

First, To those who are yet in their sins and not engaged in their affections, our work is to woo for Christ, as in *2 Cor. 5. 20.* Now then we are Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you, we pray you in Christs Stead, be you reconciled to God. Oh, Christ is willing to treat with you about this matter ; be not discouraged by reason of your meanness, for Christ is willing to be at all the Charge to fit you for this Marriage. Oh come poor sinner, treat with Christ and close in with him that you may not perish.

The second Use. Art thou espoused ? Oh admire at this great condescension to accept of thee in such an estate.

Secondly, Have a care of doing any thing to

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disoblige him or displease him who is so worthy of thee.

Thirdly, Be filled with joy in believing and hope of this day.

Fourthly, Make all ready, Garments, Oyl, Vessels ; we now proceed to the second Doctrin.

Second Doctrin, which is this, That the second coming of Christ is attended with seeming delays, or long tarryings, this is supposed or taken for granted in the Text ; some are of opinion that this tarrying is the time between the first and second Coming, or his Ascension and second Coming, others the time of espousal and marriage, or rather after conversion to Christs second coming ; but if we well weigh and consider the Context, the Verses going before, it appeareth otherwise, and that it relates to that time immediately before Christs second coming, when those signs shall appear, that are to precede his second coming, according to the 24 Chap. of *Mathew* ; *Then shall*, this Emblem be and it must be supposed that before this eminent and remarkable passage shall appear, there will be many alarms, and a great noise of it, *as have been some years since in England* ; now this tarrying must intend the time beyond this general expectation of him ; now the slowness of motion in this his coming, occasions this Language of tarrying : it is said *Math. 25. 19* *after a long time the Lord of those Servants cometh and reckoneth with them*, and so in *Luk. 20. 9.* it is said of Christ in the Parable, that he went into a far Country for along time ; here upon the slothful servant saith, my Lord delayeth from his second coming, *Luk. 12. 45.* and from this ground ariseth those Mockers in *2 Pet. 3. 4.* *when is the promise of his coming ? for since the Fathers*

fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the creation. It seemed so long that it had been talked of, and yet not come, that they were ready to think it would never be; (Objection) but some may say how can this tarrying, or slowness in Christs coming answer to those many Scriptures and Similitudes that we used to set forth the suddenness and speediness of Christ coming; we have it three or four times said, behold I come quickly, and in *Hab.* 10. 37. *For yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.* And the second coming of Christ is compared to things that come suddenly, as *Noahs* Flood, Travail upon a woman with Child, to Lightning, to a Thief in the night. I Answer, in these Scriptures and Similitudes is intended Christs speedy coming, when he is upon his march: as for instance, *Noahs* Flood did not come suddenly, considered from the first threatening, for they had a 120 years warning, yet it come suddenly at the present upon the World when they were secure, not expecting of it, so Travail upon a woman with Child, she hath eight or nine months time to know it, yet it comes suddenly when it doth come, the Surprise is suddenly; so when Christ cometh it is as a sudden surprizal, see *1 Thessal.* 5. 3. When they shall say peace and safety, then cometh sudden destruction; Lightning is sudden in its act, so is a Thief, there is a tarrying, and not tarrying, as in *Hab.* 2, 3. *For the Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry,* from which place we may note these things.

First, That Visions are apt to tarry.

Secondly, That by the Vision, tarrying Persons are apt to be weary of waiting.

Thirdly, That when they come they come speedily. It further appears that Christ in his second coming cometh not so soon as look'd for, by the expectations and disappointments that attended the Primitive Saints, 1 Cor. I. 7. *So that ye came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, so in 1 Thes. I. 10. *They were set to wait for Gods Son from Heaven*, and St. Paul Prayed for them that they might patiently wait for Christ, as in the 2 Thes. 3. 5. Yet these Saints are dead before Christ came. But suppose this question be ask'd, why Christ seems so slack in his second coming, that it hath been spoken of in all Ages, not only before he went away, but before he was Born: St. Peter answers the question fully with changing the term, slack into long-suffering, as in 2 Peter 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance*, it is for souls sake that they might not perish.

The first Use. This informs us what great need the Spoule of Christ hath of patience; ye have need of patience as in Heb. 10. 36. *Yea absolute need of patience*, those who are waiting for Christ have need of long patience. Take Habakkuk's counsel though he tarry wait for him. This was St. Pauls Prayer that God would direct their hearts to the love of God and patient waiting for Christ: *do not be slothful*.

Secondly, If Christ come not so soon as he is look'd for, then it may instruct those that are going forth to meet him, to make provision for a day, or long tarrying; the fault of the Foolish Virgins lay here, they did not make provision for

a delay, they had just Oyl enough for the present. There are some Professors who if Christ should come upon them in the beginning of their Christian Profession, he would find them in a pretty good state, their Lamps are burning, their Oyl not spent. Oh! How full of Love, Zeal, Faith, Joy, are they, insomuch that they could follow Christ in a Land not sown, their love to Christ is so strong as *Israel's* was of Old, of whom God complaineth, *Jerem. 2. 2.* they had such love (which God remembred) in the day of their first espousals, but they lost their first love, as *Ephesus* did in *Rev. 2. 4.* so these have in some years spent all, and are gone to sleep, with Lamps gone out; their stock is spent, no Oyl left; therefore it is the wisdom of a Christian going forth to meet the Bridegroom, to prepare for and expect a delay; therefore our Lord Christ exhorts him that begins to build in his ways, to sit down and count the cost; lest he expose himself to be mocked at as a Fool, who began to build and had not wherewith to finish, see *Luk. 14. 30.* these foolish *Virgins* did (as it were) begin to build, and had not wherewith to finish, so did the stony ground in the Parable, *Mark 4. 5.* But what stock must we lay in, or what provision must we make, that we may hold out to the end?

First, Be sure thou hast a true and sincere love to Christ in the root, else thou canst not wait long for him in differing dispensations.

Secondly, Be sure thou hast true love to the Brethren, this is part of that Oyl that will hold out, Charity never faileth, this is a durable grace, *1 Cor. 13. 8.*

Thirdly, Have faith in the certainty of Christs second coming; though he do tarry, yet believe he

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will come; this grace is of necessity, for the just shall live by faith as in *Heb.* 10. 38.

Fourthly, Keep a good conscience, that will be a special Companion whilst thou art waiting, this had *Paul* as in *Act.* 24. 16. *Herein do I exercise my self to have a conscience void of offence towards God and Man*, so likewise in *2 Cor.* 1. 12.

Fifthly, Maintain a Universal good spotless and holy conversation.

Thirdly, Doth Christ stay longer than is expected, then this will render those unprovided, the more inexcusable if thy work be not done, having so long a time it is an aggravation to blame, this is an argument against *Jezebel*, *Revel.* 2. 21. *I gave her space to repent, and she repented not*, one reason why Christ delays his coming is, that we might be ready; and Christ expects an increase of grace, not diminishing in our graces by his tarrying.

The fourth use. This may be a Use of Caution to the word, though Christ seems to stay long, yet he will most certainly come at last; though the Flood upon the old World stayed long, yet it came at last; though travail upon a Woman with Child is talked on long, yet it cometh at last, this *St. Peter* asserts in answer to those Mockers spoken of *2 Pet.* 3. 10. *But the day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night, though the season be long, the saying is true, and will be fulfilled.*

Fifthly, Though Christ tarry long, have a special care of security in lying down, for that may be the time of his coming; have a special care of neglecting thy Watch lest Christ cometh and taketh thee napping or sleeping; if he do, that will be sad, this seemeth to be much supposed in those words, *Mark* 13. 36. lest coming suddenly he find

find you sleeping, so much for the first Doctrin.

We now proceed to the third Doctrin which was this, That the great prevailing evil amongst Professors in the latter days a little before the second coming of Christ; is a slumbring and sleeping State, or frame of Spirit: *They all slumbr'd and slept*: A slumbring and sleeping temper, doth prevail upon Professors in the latter days.

Now in the prosecution of this Doctrin.

First, I shall explain what this sleep is, and how it is understood in Scripture.

Secondly, Prove the Doctrin, that this is the overspreading evil of the last days.

Thirdly, I shall give you the reasons why it is so.

Fourthly, Give some symptoms of a Person declining towards this sleeping State.

Fifthly, Make the use of the whole.

First, I shall open the nature of this evil, (called) slumbring and sleeping; Indeed this Language our Lord speaketh, to our capacities and in our Language; he doth not in this mean or intend natural sleep; that is no evil, Christ himself is found in that, as you may see in *Math. 8. 24. And behold there arose a great tempest in the Sea, insomuch that the Ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep*: it is no more evil to be found so sleeping, then to be found eating and drinking; but by slumbring and sleeping in Christs sence here, must be understood of the inward man; now what this is must be considered.

There are two words used in the Text, slumbring and sleeping, which may be fitly applied to the two sorts of Persons in our Text, the wise

and foolish ; the wise slumbred, the foolish slept properly they all slept more or less. The Learned tell us that there are three words made use of to set out sleep in the Hebrew tongue.

First, A word that setteth forth sleep in general sense

Secondly, A word that signifies deep sleep, or time dead sleep, (as we call it)

Thirdly, A word which signifieth weak and shallow sleep, or a slumber, to forget our selves (as we call it.) *David* seemeth to make a double distinction, as you may see in *Psal. 132. 4. I will not give sleep to mine Eyes, nor slumber to mine Eye-lids* : For sleeping is more than slumbring, and a dead sleep more than an ordinary sleep, a Person may slumber at his work or business, but not sleep ; there is a fourfold difference between slumbring and sleeping.

First, Slumbring is more external than internal, slumbring is contrary to deep sleep ; in slumbring the thoughts may be awake and at work, but in deep sleep the thoughts are asleep also ; of this slumbring state must the Church be understood, when she speaketh as you may read in *Cant. 5. or Solomons Song, ver. 2. in these words, I sleep, but my heart waketh ; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the Night* : this may give us to understand that although the eyes may be shut, yet the thoughts may be awake and at work ; and thus it may be understood of the wise Virgins, they slumbred, not slept.

The second difference between slumbring and sleeping is in the length of time ; a slumber supposeth a short time, whereas a deep sleep is long ; and

proper

proper to young and healthy, weary and drunken
Persons; whereas slumbring is proper to aged weak
Persons.

Thirdly, A person in slumbring is (as to himself)
sensible of the length of time, and thinketh the
time longer than it is; whereas in a deep sleep he
is not sensible, but thinketh the time shorter than
it is; it is certainly true, that a Person in a spiritual
sleep, a deep sleep, is not sensible of the length of
time he lyeth in that secure quiet estate, till some
eminent dispensation of affliction awaketh him.

Fourthly, One in a slumber, a small noise doth
awaken him, he can here lightly and distinctly as
the Church could, *Cant.* 5. 2. it is the voice of my
beloved; though she was in this shallow sleep, she
is soon awaked; but a Person in a deep sleep is not
easily awaked; to this the Prophet *Isaiab* alludeth,
in *Isaiab* 28. 10. they are in a deep sleep, there-
fore there must be Line upon Line, Precept upon
Precept to awaken them, these Persons are said to
be under a Spirit of deep sleep.

Now that this evil of slumbring and sleeping will
prevail in the latter days, a little before the second
coming of Jesus Christ, will appear,

First, From that Provision that Christ hath made
with particular respect to that day; for it is plain
and clear from *Math.* 24. 25. our Lord Jesus
Christ is here upon the predictions of his second
coming, and when he speaketh of wakefulness or
watchfulness it is as to that day also, you may see
Mark 13. and the two last ver. *lest coming suddenly*
he find you sleeping, and further addeth in these
words, *what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch*;
this implieth the danger that will be in that day:
Christ seemeth to intimate that then Persons will be
very

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very prone, and apt: to fall into those evils in that day; even then when Christ is near his second coming, what less then this can be supposed to be the meaning of all those cautions, warnings, counsels, exhortations directed to this day from Christ's own mouth.

Secondly, The truth of this position appeared from those beginnings of this defection, even in the Apostles days, see what St. Paul saith to the Church of the Romans, *Rom. 13. 11. And thus now knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed.* By this we are informed that such an evil as this of Sleeping did begin to appear in the Apostles days, also see what the Apostle saith to the Church of the Ephesians, *Ephe. 5. 14. These words, wherefore he saith, wake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light, and further read what the Apostle saith to this matter in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, Thes. 5. 6. In these words, Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober,* by this it doth appear that there was Sleeping in that day according to the sense of the Text before us; but what may be the reason of the prevailing of this evil in the latter day?

First it may arise from the abounding of formal external Professors in those days, (I may say) many are asleep because never truly awakened, only rowzed, not raised from death, or to stand up from the dead: there are many that are startled, and scared, afflicted, and convinced, but not thoroughly converted and awakned and raised up from the dead, (as the Apostle calleth it.) We read that while St. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance

rance

ance and judgment to come; *Felix* trembled, but we hear no more of him, he was not thorowly awakened nor raised up, to this agreeth what the Apostle speaketh of Professors amongst the prevailing evils of the latter days, in 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. *These words having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away.*

Secondly, It ariseth sometimes from former wakefulness and industry, it is observed that Persons of a more than ordinary zeal and industry, weary themselves and soon fall a sleep, of this sort were the Church of *Ephesus* spoken of, in *Rev.* 2. 2, 3, 4. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tryed them which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars. And thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my names sake thou hast laboured and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: this people had laboured much, 'tis twice exprest, we find four qualifications which did precede the drowsie and sleepy state of this Church, which is exprest by the Spirit of God in that place.*

First, They were choicely indued with the grace of patience in affliction, 'tis twice exprest in the Context.

Secondly, They were not only patient but active, they laboured, as is twice exprest.

Thirdly, They could not bear with evil in their members or teachers, which was a choice qualification in them.

Fourthly, They held a long time in this State; therefore it is added, and hast not fainted, yet after this industry she fell a sleep, she left her first love, and

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and ceased this vigorous motion, whereupon they
are called upon to do their first works. So though
the Church of *Sardis* had likewise persevered well, they
are only desired to hold fast what they had. The
Hebrew Church was eminent for zeal and industry,
if we compare them with *Acts 4. 4.* *Howbeit*
many of them which heard the word believed, and the
number of the men were about five thousand. *All*
Heb. 10. 32. *But call to mind the former days, in which*
after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight
of afflictions, but now they were asleep.

Thirdly, This is occasioned from Satans subtil
endeavours, to work persons out of love with the
Holy Scriptures: from hence it is that *St. Paul*
taketh such pains to perswade *Timothy* to have a due
esteem and respect to the Holy Scriptures, to the
end he might be preserved in the power of God's
grace, as in *2 Tim. 3. chap. 14. ver. to the end.*
But continue thou in the things which thou hast learn-
ed, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou
hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast
known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make
thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in
Christ Jesus: All Scripture is given by Inspiration
of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof,
for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that
the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished
to all good works, compare this with *Rev. 3.*
Concerning the Church in *Philadelphia*, *I know thy*
works, behold I have set before thee an open door, and
no man can shut it, for thou hast a little strength, and
hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Fourthly, This evil is prevalent in the latter
days greatly for want of prayer. Christ foreseeing
that, putteth forth a Parable; as in *Luke 18. 1.* *An-*

he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men thought always to pray and not to faint, therefore Jesus Christ joyneth watching and prayer together, or waking and prayer together, as the great duty of the latter days: that person that is a diligent praying person, is a wakeful person. Prayer is the first alive, and the last dead in a person; if thou art negligent here, thou art declining to drowsiness.

The fifth occasion of this sleep, is occasioned from that sensuality and excess in the Creature, this was one of those evils that Jesus Christ foresaw would be prevalent, as antecedent to this slumbring, see *St. Mat. 24. 37, 38, 39.* *as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be; for as in the days that were before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the Ark, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be;* So likewise *St. Luke 17. 26,--30.* you have the same words. This was the sin which did preceed the flood, and the overthrow of Sodom, so it also shall go before the coming of the Son of man; and consequently before this sleeping state; they then were sensually excessive in the Creature: so also when the Apostle speaketh unto the Romans, *ch. 13. v. 14.* *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof,* this he speaketh to be awakening and rousing them from this spiritual sleep.

Sixthly, This is occasioned by that slothfulness and negligence in those Christian Duties required of us. There are many Christian duties required of us, as Christians, the neglect whereof doth occasion this sleep. What Solomon saith upon an outward account is true in this, in *Prov. 19. 15.* *Slothfulness*

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ness casteth into a deep sleep, and the Idle Soul shall suffer hunger, the same doth the Apostle St. Peter Se hint, 2 St. Pet. 1, 9, 5. *And besides this, give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge, or this he speaketh to be a provoking one d them to watchfulness.*

The fourth thing that I am to speak to, is to laypon down some discovering Characters, where a person may know whether he be declined, or declining into, or towards this spiritual sleep.

First, He that is declining, or declined, is one that hath upon him a general indisposition to spiritual duties and Exercises, he has a loathfulness, and dullness, and heartlessness to hearing, reading, praying and such like, if his body be in the duty, his heart is else where; of this God complaineth, as in *Ezek. 33. 9. 31.* *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words but will not do them, with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after Covetousness.*

Secondly, He hath a disposition to separate himself from lively, spiritual, wakeful Societies, no heart to assemble with the people of God, but loveth to be alone.

Thirdly, Such persons do not prize or preserve Communion with God in Holy duties.

Fourthly, Such a persons Lamp or light burneth dimm for want of trimming, their conversation is dark and dimm.

Fifthly, Such a person is notable to make Judgment of the light of Gods countenance, or the hiding of Gods face; two signes of one asleep.

First he ceaseth his spiritual motion, or action, he ceaseth the very duty it self, as to prayer, reading.

reading hearing conversing of what is good.
Pett Secondly, All his spiritual senses are asleep, as
all hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling.

Thirdly, He is not affected nor awakened, under
one differing dispensation of God, whether affliction,
or prosperity; God bestoweth great mercies
upon him, yet he is not affected with them, God
perendeth some afflictions, but he taketh no notice of
them, he is not awakened.

Fourthly, All instructions and reproofs move
him not at all, he remaineth still the same.

Fifthly, He maketh it his great business to fulfil
the desires of the flesh and mind.

use. If this be the prevailing sin of the last days
preceding our Lords second coming, then cer-
tainly if we look in us and about us, we cannot but
judge this day of Christ draweth near; doth not
this evil prevail in our day more then ever, are not
the Virgins for the generality of them, Slumbring
and Sleeping, as may be easily gathered by the former
Characters, too visibly seen and experienced in us
and amongst us?

Secondly, This may serve for instruction, and that
to two sorts of people;

First, to those awake.

Secondly, To those asleep, if they may be supposed
to hear it.

First to those awake in these days; some I hope
are, and be affected with thy happy state, and know
who it is that hath opened thine eyes, the time
was thou wast a sleep as well as others, but God
hath quickened and awakened thee.

Secondly, Art thou awake, then keep in spiritual
exercises, that is, the means to keep thee awake;
use thy self to reading, hearing, praying, breaking
bread

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bread, Church-fellowship with the people of God. I will only name some awakening considerations.

First, Consider though you are asleep, your adversary Satan is always awake.

Secondly, Consider, that God whom you profess never slumbers nor sleeps.

Thirdly, Consider natural death is very uncertain, as to his surprizal.

Fourthly, Consider that to be surprized by natural death in a spiritual sleep, is very dreadful.

Fifthly, Consider that a spiritual sleeping state is a weakning, loosening, impoverishing state.

Sixthly, Consider that a sleeping frame of spirit is an inexpressible distasteful state to God.

Seventhly, Consider that this sleeping state is that which gratifieth our adversary, it is his time to do his mischief.

Eighthly, Consider our salvation is very near, Romans 13. 11. the Apostles great argument,

Ninthly, This spiritual sleep and death is the same, and both the state before conversion.

Tenthly, A wakeful spiritual state, is the most sweet and pleasantest state in the world. Oh see how sweet it was with thee then, when it was so with thee. Thus I have done with the fifth Verse.

We now proceed to the sixth Verse : *And at Midnight there was a Cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go you out to meet him :* We have contained in this Verse a particular relation of the coming of Christ, for it is taken for granted that Christ is the subject of our text ; and in this second coming of Christ we have five circumstances considerable, and are worthy to be spoken unto.

First, The remarkableness of it : it is ushered with a Behold as it is elsewhere.

Four times we have it added to or ushering in his coming, as those things that are of great concernment, which call for more than our ordinary observation, are brought in with a Behold, as I may shew you thorowout the whole Scriptures ; and it is no wonder, though this appearance of Christ be ushered with a Behold, for it is a remarkable passage upon a fivefold consideration.

First, As to the transcendent incomparable glory of his Person in that day ; this is that which Persons are called to behold : One glorious in apparel is an object of observation, this occasioneth the Church to cry, as in *Isaiah 63. 1* *Who is this, that cometh from Edom, with died Garments from Bozrah, it is that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save ;* Christ in his first coming, came in the form of a Servant, mean in his apparel ; but now in his second coming, shall come clothed with visible Glory ; he shall then be girt with Glory, as you may read in *Psal. 45. 3.* *Gird thy Sword upon thy Thigh, O most Mighty, with thy Glory and thy Majesty.*

Secondly, This second coming of Christ deserves a Behold, from that glorious and numerous attendance which he shall have in that his appearing ; this is that which *Jude* had in his eye, in his fourteenth Verse of his Epistle, and *Enoch* the seventh from *Adam* prophesied of these, saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints :* also in *Psal. 68. 17.* *The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels, the Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place ;* this is that also that the Prophet

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Zachariah speaketh in his fourteenth Chapter and his first Verse compared with the fifth Verse, *Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and ye shall flee to the Valley of the Mountains, for the Valley of the Mountains shall reach unto Azai; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the Earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Judah, and the Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee: this is an object that calleth for observation, his glorious attendance.*

Thirdly, This second appearance deserveth a Behold to be annexed unto it, in consideration of the great power he shall be clothed with in that day: therefore the Evangelist *St. Matthew* in *Math. 24. 30.* speaking of the coming of Christ, saith, *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and then shall all the Tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of the Heaven, with power and great glory:* so saith *St. Mark* also, as you may read in *Mark 13. 26.* *And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds with great power and glory;* and so likewise *St. Luke* writeth in the very same words, *Luk. 21. 27.* in these places power and glory are coupled together: Christ in this day shall come as a King; then it is no wonder that Persons are invited to behold a King; *Math. 22. 11.* *And when the King came, he saw there a Man which had not on a wedding Garment, and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding Garment? and he was speechless: if this King do but ask a Question, it striketh them speechless: such power is in it.*

Fourthly, It calleth for a Behold from the consideration of that wrath and anger he appeareth in, in that day; this day is called the day of wrath, yea

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and his wrath, this maketh the Prophet *Isaiab* put a *Behold* to it, *Isaiab* 13. 9. *Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel with wrath and fierce anger. to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.* alio you may read further in *Rev.* 6. 17. *For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.*

Fifthly, It is remarkable as to the effects of this day, both as to the righteous and the wicked, see for this as to the wicked it will be a day of wrath, both cruel, and with fierce anger, as in *Isaiab* 13. 9. and further as to the wicked consider *Isaiab* 34. 4. *And all the Host of Heaven shall be dissolved, and the Heavens shall be rolled together as a Scrole; and all their Host shall fall down as the Leaf falleth off from the Vine, and as a falling Fig from the Fig-tree: and then shall the indignation of the Lord be upon all Nations, and he will stir up his fury upon all their Armies: he will utterly destroy them, and deliver them to the slaughter; as in the second ver. but as to the righteous, what will be the effect of this day unto them, consider and read *Isaiab* 35. 4. *Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, he will come and save you. And the righteous also shall enter into life eternal, even when the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, as in *Math.* 25. 46.**

The second thing to be considered and spoken to is the juncture of time that he shall come in, called here *Midnight*: Night or *Midnight* is not always to be taken in a literal and proper sense, but sometimes mystically and allegorically, as in that place, *Micab* 3. 6. *Therefore Night shall be unto you, that shall not have a Vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that you shall not divine, and the Sun shall go down,*

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down over the Prophets, and the day shall be day unto them: so Amos 8. 9. And it shall come to pass saith the Lord God, that I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: trouble also is called darkness, see Job 5. 14. They meet with darkness in the day time; and grope at Noon day as in the Night.

And according to that understanding, the deepest sorrows and afflictions and states of darkness may be called Midnight: to have a noise, trouble, and hurry at Midnight is very sad and amazing, therefore as a very sad state and condition it is said Job 34. 20. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at Midnight; and pass away; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand: and when God will make his Judgments remarkable indeed, he chuseth to execute them in the Night: as at the Midnight, as Exod. 12. 29. And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on the Throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the Castle: Christ is said to come as a Thief in the Night, as in 1 Thess. 5. 2. For your selves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a Thief in the Night: so in 2 Pet. 3. 10. But the day of the Lord will come as a Thief in the Night, in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up: the middle of the Night is a sad time to be disturbed, it was an argument sufficient to hinder the man rising to supply his Friend with Leaven Luke 11. 7. it was Midnight, so that Christ's coming at Midnight, implies three things.

First, He cometh when Persons least look for him, the Virgins did not look for Christ at that season, and yet Christ chuseth that time to come in, as is plain from *Math. 24. 43.* But know t'is, that if the good man of the House had known in what watch the Thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his House to be broken up. Therefore be ye ready, for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh: so likewise in *Luk. 12. 4.* you have the same words. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour that ye think not: also in *Mark 13. 33.* Take ye heed; watch, and pray, for ye know not when the time is: it is foretold to be in such a juncture of time, as you may further read in *1 Thess. 5. 3.* For when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and they shall not escape.

Secondly, When Christ is said to come at Midnight, it implies a very dark time as to a Vision, *Micah 3. 6.* Therefore Night shall be upon you, that ye shall not have a Vision, and it shall be dark unto you that ye shall not divine, and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

Thirdly, A troublesome time, a time of great distress and dark dispensations, as in *Amos 8. 9.* And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon-day, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: and further in *Luk. 21. 25, 26, 27.* And there shall be signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of Nations with perplexity, the Sea and the waves roaring, Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are

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coming on the earth, for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken: And then shall they see the son of Man coming in a Cloud with power and great glory. Is it true then that Christ thus cometh, what may be the Use of this Doctrine?

Use. Then give not way to spiritual sleep, though in the Night, nay though Midnight; forasmuch as Christ may come in that hour, we know not, whether he may come at Midnight, cock-crowing, or dawning of the day: it is natural for Persons to sleep in the Night one would think, but in this sense we must have a care of giving way to this sleep though in the Night; Christ was offended at his Disciples that they were asleep, though in the Night, at that time when he was to be betrayed. See *Math. 26. 42.* And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

The Second Use, Oh what a dreadful time will that be to wicked men, Enemies to Christ considered with this circumstance of time; Condemned persons amongst us have a Bell rung at midnight, the night before Execution, and how sad and amazing is this to those concerned alarms of War, or fire is dreadful in the night especially at midnight, remember Christs coming is at midnight.

The Third thing to be spoken unto, is the relation that Christ appropriates to himself, and that is a Bridegroom: the Bridegroom cometh not, now the Lord cometh though that is true. I shall but touch this head because I have spoken to it before; yet I will speak a few words with respect to himself.

First he cometh transcendently glorious in his apparel, Bridegrooms used to be adorned, as in *Isaiah, 62. 10.* I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul shall

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shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a Bride adorneth herself with jewels.

Secondly, Even as a Bridegroom he cometh with his heart and face filled with tender affections, and conjugal love, with arms open to receive his dearest Spouse.

Thirdly, He cometh with his heart and face filled with wrath and revenge to those that have been her Enemies, who have wronged her in his absence, see that Eminent place *Isaiah 34. 8.* For it is the day of the Lords vengeance, and the year of recompence for the controversy of Sion. Also *Zech. 2. 8.* For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, After the Glory hath he sent me unto the Nations which spoiled you, for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye, this he will do, because those that touch his Spouse, touch the apple of his eye.

Use. What may we gather from hence, that Christ in his second coming, thus cometh as a Bridegroom to his Saints and people?

First, Then the spouse of Christ hath no cause to be afraid of Christs second coming, the true spouse of Christ may say of him in his appearance, as the *Isaiah 25. 9.* And it shall be said in that day, loe, this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us, this is the Lord we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his Salvation. From this ground it ariseth, that the Primitive Saints are so desirously waiting for Christ, as in *1 Cor. 1. 7.* So that ye came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also *1 Thess. 1. 10.* And to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the

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dead, even Jesus who delivereth us from the wrath to come. So Rev. 22. 20. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen, even so come Lord Jesus. And farther the Spouse in the Canticles prayeth earnestly for it, as you may see in Solomons Song, 8. 14. *Make hast my beloved and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.*

The Second use. To those who are interested in Christ upon certain grounds thus as a Bridegroom let them be found praying for his coming though at midnight; good news is welcome at midnight, a dear Friend is welcome at midnight, when an Enemy is unwelcome at midday. A woman that hath a good and loving Husband, who hath been gone a long Voyage for her good to make provision for her, she will be glad to arise at midnight to let him in: all this is true in Christ, his death, his going away as well as his return, is for his Churches good, he laid down his life for her, as you may read in Eph. 5. 25. *Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it: he goeth away for her good, as you may read in John 14. 2. 3. In my Fathers house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to my self, that where I am, ye may be also:* Christ cometh again to her from the love he beareth to her to receive her unto himself, and doth not a constant, much more a tender and a loyal wife desire the return of her Husband who hath been long absent? the Spouse of Christ will, when in her right frame of Spirit, doubtless say with St. John, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Lastly,

Lastly, If Christ so come, then let none desire his coming under this consideration, but answer it in preparation, for the Bride must be answerable in her adorning to the Bridegroom, as in *Psal. 45. 13, 14.* *The Kings daughter is all glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold, she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of Needle work, the Virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.* Also *Rev. 19. 7, 8.* *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine Linnen clean and white: for the fine linnen is the righteousness of the Saints.*

We come now to the fourth thing considerable in the explication of this Text, and that is the acclamation and Proclamation that shall be made at midnight, and the great question will be, who makes this cry, the *Virgins* being all asleep? Some are of opinion that the Ministers who are yet notwithstanding awake, standing upon their Watch to hear make this Cry.

But it is most probable that this voice is from Heaven, for so we find it all along in the Book of the *Revelations* which relates unto this day, all these alarms are from Heaven, see *Rev. 18. 1, 2.* *And after these things I saw another Angel come down from Heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory, and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of Devils, and the hold of every foul Spirit, and a Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird.* The Prognosticks against Babylon calling out Gods people is from Heaven; and so *Rev. 9.* where we have a relation of

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of this very Coming of Christ as a Bridegroom it is from Heaven, read the words *Rev. 19. 5. And a voice came out of the Throne saying, praise our God all ye his Servants, and ye that fear him both small and great.*

The use of this Doctrine. See the care that our Lord hath, that he would not surprize his Disciples; the Lord doth afford awakening means to the very day of his coming, even in those dark midnight dispensations there shall be a very great clamour or Cry, for it must needs be very loud that such effects follow, as to awake those that are so secure and dead asleep.

The fifth thing to be spoken unto is the invitation, go ye forth to meet the Bridegroom: but some may say, did not they go forth before, they took their Lamps and went forth to meet him, I answer yea, they did go forth before but by their spiritual slothfulness and sleep, they were reduced to their former estate, and wanted now an Invitation again to go forth, this was the estate of the *Ephesians*, though they were once quickened by the grace of God, as in the *Eph. 2. 1. And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins:* yet this people afterwards was called upon to awake out of sleep, as in *Eph. 5. 14. you may thus read, Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.* Also *Rev. 2. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy Candlestick except thou repent.*

Secondly, They are not only to go forth but to this end to meet the Bridegroom, Christ doth expect his spouse should come to meet him in his coming,
and

and not to sit still till he come ; we know Kings and Embassadors are usually met and brought in by the people ; the Saints are said to be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air, as in *1 Thess. 4. 17.* *Then we which are live and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord:* there is a twofold meeting the Lord.

First, By reformation, as we must understand it in *Amos 4. 12.* *Prepare to meet thy God O Israel,* that is, by reformation and amendment of life.

Secondly, There is a personal meeting understood in a proper sense, see *Numb. 23. 16.* *And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his Mouth:* in the same proper sense the Brethren met St. Paul, *Act. 28. 15.* To meet implies these four things.

First, To rise up from security in which a Person lyeth.

Secondly, To go from our enjoyments.

Thirdly, To go to meet a Person of high estate, there is required urable apparel and garb.

Fourthly, To meet in this sense, is to fall in and come along with him; see *1 Thess. 4. 14.* and also *Zach. 14. 5.* *Behold the Lord cometh, and all the Saints with thee:* thus much as to the sixth Verse.

We now come to the seventh Verse. *Then all those Virgins arose and trimmed their Lamps:* Forasmuch as I design brevity in the remaining part of this Parable, I shall at once cast my eye upon these seven last Verses ; in which seven Verses, we have the actions and transactions of the awakened Virgins ; we have seven remarkable passages relating to these two sorts of Virgins.

First, We have the joynt and particular proceedings

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ings concerning their Lamps, they are no sooner awake, but their Lamps are the subjects of their inquisition and inspection, they inquire forthwith what condition their Lamps are in, as is supposed in that they are said without exceptions to trim, in which we have contained the living sense that falleth upon the foolish in that day when it is too late, in knowledg of their want of Oyl.

Secondly, We have the Cordial solici ation of the foolish unto the wise for Oyl, and that not by way of command or purchase, but free gift, Give us of your Oyl.

Thirdly, We have the seeming affectedness upon the foolish appearing in their sorrowful reason, for our Lamps or Lights are extinguished, or as we read it gone out; we are sensible we are in a sad dark condition if you do not supply us.

Fourthly, We have the reply of the wise, and indeed it seemeth to savour of harshness and uncharitableness in three circumstances.

First, Their positive denial, not so, or we cannot do it; nor it is not in our power so to do.

Secondly, Their selfish reason given, we must supply or serve our selves first: *Nabal's* answer to *David's* Servants will serve in this case, Shall I take the Oyl that I have provided for my self, and give it to you? No.

Thirdly, It is harsh as to the ironical advice given, considering the time it was given in, there was none then to be had; they served those as *Elijah* served *Baal's* worshippers, 1 *King.* 18. 27.

The Sixth thing considerable, is the advantage of the wise, they are said to be ready, having a stock by them, they went in with the Bridegroom.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, We have the full relation of the disappointment of the foolish *Virgins*, in three circumstances.

First, The door is shut against them.

Secondly, We have the successful allegation of their profession and acquaintance with Christ, which was with great confidence, if we compare *Math. 7. 23.* with *Luk. 13. 27.* *But he shall say unto them, I tell you I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.*

Thirdly, We have Christ's positive denial to open the door, with the reason of it.

Eighthly, We have in these Verses our Lords application of the whole Parable, in a general use of exhortation to the duty of watchfulness; as if in effect our Lord should say, You my Disciples take notice, all these evils have (or shall) happen for want of this great duty of watchfulness, for the best of these and the wisest had enough to do to be ready to go in with Christ, now of each of these eight particulars I shall briefly speak a few words.

First, The actions and transactions of these both wise and foolish in order to their Lamps, in which circumstance we have four Emphatical words.

First, then.

Secondly, all.

Thirdly, arose.

Fourthly, trimmed.

This then hath reference to the time of the cry in Verse the seventh; it implies the speediness of this address; there is no delay when this alarm is given, neither will it admit of a delay, for Christ is swift in his motion, in his second coming.

Secondly,

Secondly, We have the universality of this attempt, (all,) the foolish as well as the wise are concerned herein, as all ten fell asleep, so all ten are awakened by this Midnight cry.

Thirdly, They arose, not only awaked but arose, stood up: the word here is often and generally in Scripture used to set forth a resurrection from the dead.

Fourthly, The business they set upon when thus raised, the Text saith they trimmed their Lamps or Candles; for Lamps and Candles are taken one for another, as you may see in the margent, where Candle is read. We read in Scripture of two sorts of Lamps, burning bright and shining Lamps, as in *Isaiah* 62. 1. *For Sions sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalems sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that Burneth.* Compare this with *St. John* 5. 35. *He was a burning, and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to joyce in his light,* such was *St. John* in his conversation, and Doctrine.

Secondly, We read of a despised Lamp, as in *Job* 12. 5. *He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a Lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease,* that is, an old rusty Lamp without light or Oyl, what is that good for? it is of no esteem, the foolish *Virgins* Lamps are despised Lamps, according to what *Job* speaks, in *Job* 12. 5. of no worth nor use, for what use is a Lamp of, if not to hold forth light? The great incumbent work of the *Virgins* awake is to (trim) their Lamps: the word trim in Scripture hath a four fold acceptation.

First, To adorn or beautific, see *1 Pet.* 3. 3. *Whose adorning,*

Secondly,

Secondly, It is taken for to garnish, so understood, *Mat. 12. 44.*

Thirdly to prepare or trim is all one; thus understood in *Amos 4. 12.*

Fourthly, Sometimes it is called dressing, we read in Scripture of dressing the Lamps, as in *Exod. 30. 7.* Also we read of dressing feet in *2 Sam. 19. 24.* Now to dress or trim a Lamp implyes two things.

First to draw up the wick to make it burn clear.

Secondly, To pour in Oyl to supply the root; from whence it is said they had Vessels besides their Lamps, I shall note from the words thus opened, these four things or Doctrines observable.

First Doctrine that spiritual drowsiness, slumbering, and sleeping doth dammage and ruine our profession, weakeneth our Lamps or lights, the Lamps run to ruine while they were asleep, insomuch that they now want trimming.

The second Doctrine, That the Lamps of the best and wisest professors want trimming.

The Third Doctrine, a Christian is in no fit case to meet Christ but with a trimmed Lamp.

The Fourth Doctrine, That it is the property of a truly awakened Christian to concern himself about his Lamp, so as to have it adorned, garnished, prepared, and drest: or thus, A Christian is no Christian without good light, good light is essential to a true Christian. I shall wind up this seventh verse with a few words to each of these, I hope you carry along in your minds, that by the Lamp in the context is intended the conversation; and profession for this light must be divided into two parts, the inward and the outward; the inward light is faith and love, the sense of Gods love, these all do decay

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decay whilst the Spirit of sleep is upon them

Secondly, As to the light of conversation, this also is liable to dimness, contrary to what our Lord calleth for, in *St. Mat. 5. 15. Let your lights so shine that men seeing your good works may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*: if this be the effect of this sleep, have a special care to watch against it.

The Second Doctrine. The Lamps of the best of Saints want trimming, *Psal. 73. 17.* compared with *Psal. 51. 12.* The Church of the *Hebrews*, and also the *Ephesians*. *St. Paul* stirs up *Timothy*, to trim his Lamps, while he bids him stir up the gift given him, *2 Tim. 1. 7.*

The Use from hence, by way of instruction: It doth not therefore follow that a Christian hath no light, because it doth not burn clear; it is possible it wants trimming.

The Third Doctrine. None are fit to meet Christ but such as have trimmed Lamps: therefore no sooner do these *Virgins* hear the noise of the Bridegrooms Coming, but they fall to trimming. We have a remarkable place for this, *Luk. 12. 35. Let your loines be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye your selves as those that wait for the Lord.* But that little time I shall spend, shall be upon the Fourth Doctrine.

Fourth Doctrine That a truly awakened Christian is to inquire into, and inspect the State of his Lamp, or Light. In handling of which Doctrine, I must have an eye to Light within, conversation without, grace in the heart, holiness in the conversation. An awakened soul must see how it is within, what light is there; and that there is ought to be light within is hinted in *Isaiab 50. 10.* the Prophet there speaks of one that sits in dark-

ness

ness and hath no light; this light must respect his faith and full assurance, the Face of God is called light, as in *Psal. 4. 6, 7. Lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*; this David who was truly awakened seeks after, as in *Psal. 51. Renew a right spirit within me*, saith he, *restore thy free Spirit unto me*: this is that light which David went into the Sanctuary to obtain, as in *Psal. 72. 17. see what the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonians unto*, in *1 Thess. 5. 8. in opposition to sleeping, But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the Breastplate of faith, and love, and for an helmet the hope of Salvation*: a wakeful Christian must have all right within; and if this be not our great care, it is a sad sign we are not truly awakened.

Secondly, This light respects the Conversation, and so our Lord expounds it in the aforesaid place, *Math. 5. 16. Let your light so shine*; Christ hath set his Disciples as lights in the world; Christians therefore are to shine forth; see the Apostles exhortation to the *Romans, Rom. 13. 13. Let us walk honestly as in the day*; also see *Eph. 5. 15. as the fruits of Persons awakened and standing up from the dead*, he exhorts them, *to walk Circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*: all which respect Conversation, answerable to our Text, as wise *Virgins*.

The Use. First, This may serve to discover to us, that the life and work of a Christian is not as many take it to be; a work done at once for all.

Some are ready to think that if their Lamp was well lighted at first, there needs no more care about it, but we see it is not so; there still wants trimming, daily adorning, preparing, garnishing, and feeding this Lamp, and supplying it; Lamps must

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must have attendance, care and pains taken with them; have a special care of trusting to your fire-trimming, and replenishment.

The second *Use*. Considering the divers acceptations of this word in Scripture of trimming, let each of us labour to adorn and beautifie our Lamp or Profession. Doubtless what *Titus* exhorts Servants in his second Chapter and tenth Verse, may be applied to all Sexes and relations; he exhorts them to obey and please their Master well in all things as in the ninth Verse, to this end that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. God requires that we should garnish our Lamps or Professions, as some do Candlesticks.

The third *Use*. Consider the near approach of our Bridegrooms coming, and from the consideration thereof, let us be exhorted to arise and trim, and make ready to meet him; which that you may do, observe four or five rules of direction.

First, Seriously consider and study your former experiences, in the days of your first acquaintance with Christ; how sweet his love was then to your Souls, how readily and comfortably you could follow Christ then.

First, In a Land not sown, this God calleth to remembrance, *Jerem. 2. 2.* I remember thy love in the thine Espousals; this is that which the Apostles would have the Hebrew Church to do, *Heb. 10. 32.* But call to remembrance the former days in which you were illuminated, how you then suffered a great sight of affliction.

Secondly, Labour to strengthen your love to Christ, a Person rightly trimmed to meet him as a Bridegroom, hath his heart strong in love: those that truly wait for Christ, are those that love him,

as we may easily perceive and gather by comparing *Isaiab* 64. 4. with *1 Cor.* 2. 9. that which *Isaiab* calls waiting, the Apostle calleth loving Christ; the same promises that are to those that wait for Christ, are to those that love Christ also; see *Jam.* 1. 12. compared with 2 Chap. and 5 ver. But how may I know whether I love Christ?

First, By Christ's own rule, If thou keep his Commandments; as in *John* 14. 21.

Secondly, If thou lovest the Saints and Brethren, that sheweth that thou lovest Christ; as in *1 John* 4. 20, 21.

Secondly, Labour to strengthen and refresh thy faith in Christ's second coming, and thy interest in him; by faith we stand, as in *2 Cor.* 1. 24. By faith we live; as in the 10 Chap. and 38 ver.

Thirdly, Labour to get loose from present things, without which we cannot stand ready; this is the girding up of our minds, as *Luk.* 12. 35.

Fourthly, To effect this, be much in secret prayer and supplication, which of all means is the most effectual in order to the fitting us for Christ's second coming, *Luk.* 21. 36. watch, and pray always; that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man: thus I have done with the seventh Verse.

We come now to the eighth Verse. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your Oyl, for our Lamps are gone out: Before I come to speak to this Verse, which is a Dialogue between the wise and foolish Virgins; I shall by the way take notice of the appellation upon these Virgins, (foolish) which word hath an affinity with the Hebrew *Nabal*, signifying senseless or unsavory, (as the *Rabbies* tell us,) we have this word emphatically used in

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the Old Testament, once relating to the Husband of *Abigail*, the second concerning *Jobs Wife*. First of *Nabal*, as in *1 Sam. 25. 25. Nabal is his name, and folly was with him*: he answered to his name in these four Circumstances.

First, As he was a prophane, wicked, covetous, drunken, sottish man.

Secondly, As he was a morose, railing, abusive man, he railed on *Dauids* Servants, as you may see in that Chapter.

Thirdly, He was an ungrateful Person, he rewarded evil for good to *David*, as you may see in 21 Verse.

Fourthly and Chiefly was he *Nabal* or foolish, from that he wanted a foresight, he could not see forward, and herein according to *Solomons* words, *A wise Mans eyes are in his head*: a fool can see but what is present, *Nabal* could neither see *David* present power to hurt him, or his future Kingly glory as *David* should enjoy, which his Wife wife *Abigail* could see; she is said to be of a good understanding; and indeed this is wisdom, to see forward and provide for time to come; see what *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 30. 24.* there are four things that are little, but exceeding wise; and wherein did their wisdom consist, but in forecasting for time to come; the Ant, the Cony, the Locusts, the Spider, all these are exceeding wise, *Solomon* telleth us.

Our second instance, is of *Jobs Wife*, who is called a *Nabalish Woman*, as in *Job 2. 10. Thou speakest like one of the foolish women*, and wherein did it appear?

First, In one thing it appeared, in her dulness in learning the Doctrine of godliness in *Job's* family.

Secondly,

Secondly, Her profaneness and ignorance in her speech to her Husband, Curse God, and die; not fearing or reverencing God, which is true wisdom.

But thirdly, Her want of foresight to see to the end of Gods dispensations, she looked only at present things, and things seen, which *David* himself calleth foolishness in himself, as in *Psal.* 73. 22. *So foolish was I, even as a Beast before him*: so that it appeareth, that the principal evil in these two, which rendred them by name (foolish,) was want of foresight, (having eyes in their heads,) and this is by our Lord Christ given out as the distinguishing Character between the wise and the foolish Builders, as in *Math.* 7. 24. *The wise built on a Rock*; looking forward to duration, the foolish on the sand; and wherein do the *Virgins* in our Text come short, was not this that wherein their folly did appear, they did not lay in a stock for duration.

Now we return to the words again, Verse the eighth, *And the foolish said*; these unstockt Persons upon a spiritual account are the foolish in our Text; from whence I note this Doctrine, That it is a Doctrine of the highest folly in Christs account to be without a stock and provision by us, in order for time to come, for eternity; a wise foresighted Professor, is a stockt Professor for time to come; upon an earthly account, a poor man may be a wise man, although he hath not a Penny nor a bit of bread before hand; but it cannot be so in spirituals, poor and foolish go together, as *Sa'omon* saith, *Prov.* 2. 20. there is Oyl in the dwelling of the wise, and treasure desireable; but a fool in Christs sense is a poor soul, or that hath no stock,

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or that is not rich towards God, as *Luk. 12.* 19. is a very clear place to this purpose, so is every one that is he is a fool, the wise woman *Prov. 31.* is one that is richly furnished with a stock, but how doth it further appear that such a person is a fool or foolish?

First, He is a fool as he is ignorant of the nature of God, *Psal. 94.* 8, 9. understand ye foolish, these unstockt persons would suppose God to be like man, who cannot see the Heart what is within.

Secondly, He is foolish as he hath slipt his opportunity to get a stock, this is a peice of folly indeed; so *Solomon* renders them *Prov. 17.* 16. *wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart?* or rather it is to be understood, by way of discovery that he is a fool, who hath a price in his hand to get wisdom, and does not improve it.

Thirdly, He is a fool as he is a hypocrite, who is outwardly something, but nothing within; the whole course of a hypocrite, is nothing but a course of folly; of all fools the hypocrite is the greatest fool, and the reason is because he taketh a great deal of pains, and reaps no profit by it, he doth in all his profession but play the fool; like Children that make shows, he ventures himself many times, his credit estate and life to no profit; there are none sin at so dear a rate as the hypocrite doth, nor any sinner so distastful to God as he, nor none so highly wicked as he. Now of hypocrites there are two sorts.

First a gross sort, who uphold a form of Godliness on purpose to deceive, as those we read of in *Mat. 23.* 14. who make long prayers to devour Widows Houses.

But

But there is a Second sort, who in comparison of those are simple and sincere, but yet such as are deceived themselves, and desire to deceive others, such are these in our Text; but let us know that all degrees of hypocrites is bad and punishable. Now we come to the words themselves, which contains a dialogue between the wise and foolish *Virgins*.

First, we have the petitionary request of the foolish to the wise.

Secondly, This request is backed with a reason of the petition, give us of your Oyl, their best shift is now begging; for they neither ask to buy nor borrow, but to give, but *Solomon* foreseeing their disappointment, saith *Prov. 20. 4. The Staggard will not Plow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in Harvest and have nothing*: this is the case of the foolish *Virgins* in our Text; they got nothing (give us of your Oyl,) they knew the wise had Oyl; formal outside professors can Judge of sincerity in others, though they themselves have none; (give us of your Oyl.) Oh! the great necessity that sluggish lazie professors brings upon themselves for want of improving time and means.

Secondly, We have the asserted reason rendered by the foolish to the wise, for our Lamps are gone out, and that in a time of most need; their light intended here by the Lamps is gone out; extinguished; the light of profession not fed goeth out, an hypocrites Lamp or light is not lasting, it fails him when he hath most need, at death, or at Christs coming to Judgment, nay in time of Trial and temptation, such was the stony ground, *Mat. 13. 5. Job 27. 8.* that the hope of the hypocrite fails him at the giving up of the Ghost; or when God taketh away his Soul, an hypocrite at last is not only discovered to others;

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others but to himself; he seeth and saith now that his light is gone out, though it is possible some may die with hope, and rise with hope as these seem to do; yet now in this time of need their hopes fail them. *Job* speaketh of the nature of this hope of the hypocrite, as in *Job* 8. 13, 14, 15. *So are the paths of all them that forget God, and the hypocrites hope shall perish, whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a Spiders Web or house, in five Circumstances.*

First, It is a compact of curiosity; but no strength,

Secondly, Her house is formed out of her own Bowels, not fetcht out of the Forrest or stone quarry, not like the Bee that fetches it abroad; but his hope is grounded upon his own righteousness; see the Pharisee, *Luk.* 18. 11. and the duties he performs.

Thirdly, She useth her house for a double use, to dwell in her self, and to insnare others, so doth the hypocrite.

Fourthly, She dwelleth in it with Confidence, so doth the hypocrite.

Fifthly, A Spiders house is down with little ado, the whisk or broom layeth it flat at once, as in *Isaiah* 33. 14, 15. an hypocrite shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand, *Job* 8. 15. We now proceed to the application of this Doctrine.

First, By way of Information, it doth inform us that the eternal perdition and exclusion from glory is the fruit of their folly: these were foolish *Virgins*; it seemeth to be Emphatically urged, in this Context, they were not wise, so *Solomon* speaks in *ch.* 1. ver. last. *The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools,* so *Psal.* 107. 17. fools be-
cause

cause of their transgressions are afflicted: this will greatly aggravate the condemnation of sinners. But the question will be, is this folly necessitated? Answer. No it appears to the contrary in Scripture; because that God both immediately from himself, and mediately by his Servants desireth the contrary, see the Lords ardent and passionate desire, as in *Deut. 32. 29.* *Oh, that my people were wise,* so also in *Psal. 9. 8.* *Understand, O ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise?* and this is *Solomons* wishes throughout the whole book of *Proverbs*, all along.

The Second *use*. From hence we may learn that the Wisdom, Faith, Love, Sincerity, and Holiness of one will not serve another, or do good to another though of the same Society: these were of one Company; yet the Oyl of the wise must not be imparted to the foolish. Although as to outward deliverance as from outward Judgments, those related (as the family) have received mercy upon their account, (as *Noahs* Family did) yet not eternal good things received upon their account.

The Third *use*. Have a special care of hypocrisie, it is a very dangerous evil, it is a sin of the highest magnitude, it is a sin that is very distasteful to God, a sin that Christ pronounceth more woes against than against any sin, see *Mat. 23.* (as one calleth them) they are the first born of the Devil, and there is cause for it; for an hypocrite is most dishonourable to God of all, for he renders God as the Idol Gods, that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, they think he seeth not their hearts. Christ seemeth to intimate that hypocrites are the first in Hell, as in *Mat. 24.* last. *They shall have their portion with hypocrites.*

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The Fourth Use. To the end thou maist be supplied with Oyl as the wise, then make Christ thy store-house, that is the way to have life and all spiritual supplies, as in *Gal. 2. 20. The life that I live is by Faith in the Son of God; without me (saith Christ) ye can do nothing*, as in *John 15. 4.* that Soul whose life is hid with Christ in God shall have supplies; when those that lay it up in themselves may be drawn away to go to the Creature for Oyl. We see this Parable, this invites such an answer as have (*Ne forte,*) not so, or not able.

We now proceed to the ninth Verse. *But the wise answered, saying, not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: But go ye rather to them that sell and buy for your selves.*

We now come to the reply of the wise Virgins to the foolish Virgins request, which reply of theirs seems to favour of harshness and uncharitableness in these three circumstances.

First, Their positive denial of their request, in this time of their need; (*μη νυν,*) not so, which word must be understood to arise from an impossibility, or else from a negative resolution it cannot, or we have no power, or it shall not be, or we have no will.

Secondly, The reasons given seem to favour of the same Spirit in effect, we must see our selves served first, and we fear it will not serve to supply our selves and you too.

Thirdly, Their uncharitableness seems to appear, in their ironical sending them to buy at such a juncture of time, when the Bridegroom was so near his approach; it is the judgment of the Assembly, that this is but an ironical or mocking direction, like to *Elijah's* bidding *Baal's* Prophets cry aloud,

aloud, for their God was in a journey; there are some that are of opinion, that this was simple honest counsel, but such an understanding cannot suit with the scope and season it was spoken in; but I would not stand too exactly upon every word in a Parable, but mind the scope: I now proceed to the observations from this Verse.

First, That frugality and seeming covetousness in spiritual things, is a demonstration of true wisdom, the wise answered not so, not a drachm.

Second Doctrine. The best, wisest, holiest of Saints, have none of their stock of sincerity to spare, they may well question whether there be enough for both.

Third Doctrine. From the manner of their speaking by way of Irony and mocking, from whence this Doctrine ariseth, That one part of the punishment of negligent and foolish Persons in spiritual things, they shall be the Subjects of division another day; and as some would have it simple Counsel: I note that true spiritual grace and wisdom is then rightly come at, when it is bought, not borrowed or begged, go and buy for your selves; as if they should say ours cost us dear, it is not to be given away, buy as we did.

A few words to each of these, and so I proceed.

First, That frugality and covetousness in spirituals is not only consistent with, but a demonstration of true wisdom; these are the words of the wise, not so, covetousness which is such a sin that God abhors that Person in whom it is, as in *Psal. 10. 3.* yet in this case it is allowable. *1 Cor. 12. 31. Covet earnestly the best gifts: though*
Jacob's

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Jacob's dealing with his Brother *Eſau* in an ordinary caſe would have been condemned as a piece of uncharitableneſs, yet it is not blamed in that caſe, as the bleſſing and birthright pointed at ſpirituals; therein *Eſau* only is blamed as a fornicator and profane Perſon, in *Hebrews* 1. 2. 16. We have liberty to buy the truth whatever it coſt us, but not to ſell it whatever we may have for it, *Prov.* 23. 23. Though uſury and taking increaſe in Scripture is greatly forbid, yet uſury upon a ſpiritual account is lawful and allowed, as *Matth.* 25. 27. *Thou ought to have put it out to the bank, that I might have received mine own with uſury*: the Church is exhorted *Revel.* 3. 11. *To hold faſt what ſhe had, that no man take her Crown*: the wiſe have held faſt what they had, they would not part with a drop; Chriſt loves ſuch covetous cloſeſtneſs, ſuch uſurers as will hold faſt their integrity; *Job* was of this ſort, *I will not let it go*, as *Job* 13. 13. and this muſt needs be a demonſtration of true wiſdom, for it doth ariſe from a right underſtanding the worth of grace and ſincerity; *Jacob* underſtood the worth of a bleſſing and birthright, but of *Eſau* it is ſaid, he in parting with his birthright deſpiſed and ſlighted it, ſee *Gen.* 25. 34. he is counted a wiſe man in earthly things, that holds faſt his own. But ſome may object.

Object. But is it not ſaid by *David*, *Pſal.* 40. 10. *I have not hid or concealed my righteousneſs in my heart, I have declared and ſpread it abroad*?

Answer. This is to be underſtood as to the exerciſe of grace, this is a duty which may be termed a trading with, not a parting with the ſtock; a well ſtockt Perſon is the only Perſon to do good

to others, he is the man that teacheth by experience. I can tell you by experience how I came by what I have, saith *David*, *I will tell you what God hath done for my Soul*. The declarations of experience of grace and sincerity is common to all, it is communicable as light, you cannot use it your selves, but others must have a benefit, and *David* meaneth no more than this, not to part with the principal.

The First use. My counsel from this Doctrine is in two branches.

First, The same that *St. Paul* gives, *1 Cor. 12. 31*. Covet earnestly spiritual indowments.

The Second use. When you have it, hold it fast, let none go to friend none, for take the counsel to *Philadelphia* (*Rev. 3. 11.*) *Hold fast that thou hast, let no man take thy Crown*.

We now come to the Second Doctrine, which was this, that the best, and wisest, and Holiest of Saints have none of their stock to spare, they have ground to question whether they themselves have enough, if they should part with any.

We have in this Doctrine contained the reason of the former denial, we will give you none, because we have none to spare, lest we expose our selves to want, we have little enough for our selves, and Charity begins at home, we must see our selves served first, that which *Ezek.* speaketh upon another account is certainly true here, *Ezek. 14. 24.* *He shall only deliver himself by his own Righteousness, though it were Noah, Daniel, and Job, Ezek. 18. 20. the Righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him,* and it is plain that when Christ comes, the nearest acquaintance and relations can afford no relief, therefore it is said *Luk. 17. 34.* *In that night there shall be two in one Bed, one taken, the other left.* Con-
sider

sider this you that think you can speed the better for your wife or Husbands sake, because they are righteous; the wife of the righteous *Lot*, is not saved for *Loss* sake, she is made an example, she is turned into a pillar of Salt, and if nearest acquaintance and relations would have done any good, these might, these were of one Society, went out together to meet our Lord upon the most worthy design, yet such of the company are received, the other rejected by Christ.

The First use from hence. Oh then get Oyl of your own, take the Counsel of the wise *Virgins*, now buy for your selves whilst it is to be had, take the Counsel of the Prophet, *Esa. 55.* from verse the 1 to the 7. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, in that proper season, Buy wine and Milk without money and without price.*

The Second use of Exhortation, make what use you can of the wise and truly righteous at present; for when Christ comes, then they even the wisest of them can do you no good, their righteousness now may be beneficial to you, the lips of the righteous now feeds many, but not then.

I now come to the Third Circumstance in this Text, thereply, which I told you before is taken two ways.

First, Ironically, as most understand: and the assembly of Divines (so called) so understand it, some understand it is a simple proper Counsel, but I shall speak unto it as it is ironically taken, and from thence I laid down this proposition or Doctrine, That one part of the punishment of negligent and foolish persons in spirituals is this, They shall be the Subjects of derision, as well as rejection: God

him-

himself is said to mock when their fear cometh upon them; *Proverbs* 1. 25. which must refer to this day,

Object. But some may say, it seems not to be ironical, because they took the counsel and went.

To which I answer, So did *Baal's* Prophets take *Elijah's* Counsel when he mocked them and said, *Cry aloud, your God is in a journey, or talking:* they did as he bid them, *2 King.* 18. 28. This manner of speaking is usual in Scripture, so *Solomon* speaks to the young man, *Ecc.* 11. 9. *walk after the sight of thine eyes and desire of thine heart;* which cannot be taken for proper and simple Counsel, after this manner *St. Paul* speaks to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor.* 4. 11. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye reign as Kings without us:* when in good earnest it was nothing less: from hence may arise a case of conscience, whether ironical speeches may be used among Saints.

Answ. First, They may not be used merely to please the flesh.

Secondly, Such speaking must not be the fruit of hatred, but pity.

Thirdly, The design must be to reduce foolish Persons out of their folly, this kind of speaking the Lord himself seems to use to *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 22. *The Man is become as one of us:* it could not properly be understood: But far be it from us to allow of a vain kind of mocking and scoffing to please the flesh as many use; the wise here seems to upbraid the folly and negligence of the foolish; you would not buy when you might have had it, go now and see if you can get it, the wise answer them according to their folly,

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folly, as *Micaiah* did *Abab*, Go up to *Ramoth Gilead* and prosper, when nothing less is meant to him than that. Now we proceed to the use of this *Dominion*.

First Use. Study the sadness of this punishment. Can there be a greater aggravation to a poor afflicted disappointed Person, than to be an object of mocking and derision? This is the state of the foolish *Virgins* in the last day, this is prophesied of in *Psal. 2. 4.* *He that sitteth in heaven will laugh at the Lord will have them in derision:* the same is threatned *Prov. 1. 26.*

But suppose we should take this for simple honest counsel, Go and buy for your selves: Then it affords us this observation; That true saving grace and wisdom is then rightly come at, when it is bought and purchased, not begged or borrowed: therefore Christ counsels the Church of *Laodicea*, *Rev. 3. 18.* *I counsel thee to buy of me gold, raiment and Eye-salve:* this is *Solomons* manner of speaking, *Prov. 23. 23.* *Buy the truth, and wisdom, and understanding:* and this is the Language of the Evangelical Prophet *Esa. 55. 1.* *Come buy wine and milk:* we have this language twice used in that Parable, *Math. 13.* the treasure and the pearl must be bought.

Reason. But why is this language of Scripture so frequent?

First, To set forth that sensible need that a soul rightly receiving Christ hath upon him. Persons buy when they are sensible of their needs, Persons will not usually purchase that which they see no need of: if *Laodicea* in the forecited place, could be brought off from her self conceitedness of being rich, and could see her self poor, blind and

and naked, she might readily be brought to take Christ's counsel, now this language of buying is made use of to accomodate that state.

Second Reason. Because that such a Person that is a buyer, is one that knows the worth of that which he goeth to buy: so did the Merchant in the Parable that sold all to buy the Pearl, he saw the excellency makes him buy.

Third Reason. He is at a very great price for it, it is said he sold all to buy the Pearl, see *Math.* 13. 44, 46. *Luk.* 14. 33. *He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my Disciple: Paul* judged all dung, *Phil.* 3. 9. in comparison of Christ. These things considered it is not strange that the Scripture speaks of buying.

Second Use. Hast thou gotten Oyl in thy Vessel, grace in thy heart? hast thou found and dost thou enjoy Jesus Christ, pardon of sin, assurance of glory to come? then let me ask this Question of thee, what did it cost thee? didst thou give a Market price, (as we use to say?) where things are not bought at a Market price, it renders the matter doubtful whether they be rightly come by: hast thou forsaken thine own way, thy unrighteousness, and thine own righteousness? hath it cost thee pains, violence? art thou a new creature? I am afraid it may be said of many that pretend they have found Christ and assurance of Glory, as it was said to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 27. 20. how camest thou by it so soon or so hastily?

Third Use. To those that have not yet bought, be perswaded to go thorow for Jesus Christ, it is an excellent bargain whatever it cost thee; the wise Merchant man that knows the worth of it, will have it what ever it cost him, though he sell all

for it; do not be like a Swine that tramples upon Pearls, that chooseth a handful of Oats before a handful of Pearls; strike a bargain before it be too late, do not only bid but buy whatever it cost; Solomon doth not pitch a price, what we must give for the truth.

Fourth Use. This may serve to reprove those who tread backward, who instead of buying Christ by truth and sincerity will sell them, rather choosing present enjoyments than future glory: consider the unexpressible disadvantage and loss, if you should gain the whole world and lose your own soul, *Math. 16. 26.* Thus I have done with the ninth Verse.

We now proceed to the tenth Verse. *And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; then they that were ready went in with him to the marriage.*

We have contained in this Verse two remarkable circumstances.

First, The beginning of the disappointment of the foolish *Virgins*, in which we have two parts.

First, They are out of the way when Christ came.

Secondly, The door was shut against them, which is a dreadful aggravation, for though they had been out of the way when Christ came, yet if the door had been left open for them, there had been some hope, but the door is shut, which bespeaks their state to be very bad.

Second Circumstance in the Text and that respects the wise, setting forth the great advantage of the wise above the foolish, and that is express in two Circumstances.

First,

First it is here said, they were ready.

Secondly, It is said they went in with Christ to the marriage, a singular and unspeakable priviledge.

The words are plain and want but little explication, only the word Ready: by which we must understand two things.

First, To be ready is un'ersstood sometimes to be accounted, cloathed, and apparelled; thus it is used, *Rev. 19. 7. The Bride, the Lambs wife hath made her self ready: and this readiness is in her being arrayed in that fine linnen spoken of v. 8.*

Secondly, Sometimes readiness in Scripture, doth import a waiting posture: thus it must be understood, *Luk. 12. 37. that word watch is termed by the word ready, v. the 40. Be ye therefore ready, is the same with, watch, in the former verse.*

I shall now lay down two Doctrines, as the product of this *verse*, consider'd as in conjunction with the former verse.

The First Doctrine, That there is a day and time when all endeavours of obtaining grace and wisdom will be in vain, and altogether successless; these beg of their fellows, they go to buy, and all in vain, yet they are shut out.

The Second Doctrine, That Jesus Christ doth expect and require that all those who look for glory from him should be ready for him at his coming.

I shall begin with the first of these. We see here persons punished, whilst in the use of means, whilst buying in order to *readiness*. And if the reason should be asked how this comes to pass, the answer must be here, they seek when it is too late, there is a time when grace cannot be had by all means that can then be used, this is Prophefied, *Psal. 32. 6.*

For this shall all that are Godly call upon him in a day

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of hearing: it supposeth a proper season of finding. The truth of this Doctrine is emphaticall, asserted *Prov. 1. 28. Then shall they call and I will not hearken unto them, they shall seek me early and shall not find me.* Therefore the Prophet *Isa. 55. 6. invites to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near: and to this our Lord speaks fully Luk. 13. 24. For I say unto you, many shall seek to enter and strive, and not be able.* It is a sad instance which the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 15, 16. layeth before them of Esau, who could not obtain the Blessing though he sought it carefully with tears.* But some may say, when is this day proper for seeking? I answer in our life whilst it is called to day, and whilst means last; therefore the Apostle saith *2 Cor. 6. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation.*

Secondly, On the negative, this time when the use of all means will be ineffectual, is at Christs appearance, according to the forenamed place, *Luk. 13. 25. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, according to our Text.*

Use. Be exhorted to lay hold upon t^e present time, fall in with the motions of the Spirit, be not like the sluggard, *Prov. 20. 4. who will not plow because of the Cold,* his complaint will be yours when it is too late, *Prov. 5. 11, 12, 13.*

Secondly, Content not your selves with Lamps only, these had Lamps, they did not go to buy Lamps but Oyl.

Thus much for the First Doctrine, Concerning the foolish Virgins, the beginning of their disappointment.

We now proceed to t^e Second Doctrine, which

was this: Jesus Christ expects and requires that all those who are looking for glory and happiness from him should be making ready for him: no unready persons shall enter in with him.

Now in the handling of this Doctrine, I shall first more particularly explain this word Ready, or shew you what it is to be ready.

Secondly, Prove the Doctrine, that this God and Christ do indispensably call for.

Thirdly, Lay down some reason why this is required.

Fourthly, Make use of the whole.

First, What is it to be ready in Christs sence?

I answer, It is made up of these two ingredients comprehensyve, both which we have laid down, *Luk. 12. 35. To have the loins girt about, to have the lights burning*, which allusion of Christs doth elegantly answer to our Parable of the *Virgins*; had the foolish *Virgins* been accomplished with these two, we may be assured they had gone in as well as the wise.

Now the opening of these two terms will instruct us, what it is to be ready.

First, For girding up the loins is expounded by the Apostle *St. Peter*, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* where he interprets the loins to be the mind, the thoughts, *gird up the loins of your mind*, and that it is with design of readiness, as here is plain by the Context, that to have the mind, the thoughts well fixed is intended here.

And the Apostle in this kind of speaking, doth allude to those loose Garments, used in those times and places, which garments when they were to travel they girded up close to them, or otherwise they would have much hindered them in their march.

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The Second Circumstance in order to readiness is their lights burning, alluding still to travellers in the night, who when they were reckoned to be ready, had not only the loins girt, but stood with light burning in their hand, which the foolish *Virgins* were short in.

Now these two Circumstances of loins girt, and lights burning, take in the whole of the readiness for Christ. The loins girt take in the whole of the inward man, the mind and heart answering to the vessel in our Context.

The Second, relating to the whole of conversation outward, and this latter answers to the Lamp in our Context.

Of each of these a few words.

First, Of our thoughts, what is it to have our thoughts thus girded up?

First, When our thoughts are fixed upon Christ for acceptance, in that day of his appearance, that though Christ came as a Bridegroom yet it is of his admirable grace that he accepts of us to be his spouse. This was the Faith of holy St. Paul, *Phil. 3. 20. Though his conversation was in Heaven, yet he looks for Christ his Saviour*, not his own righteousness which he undervalueth in that Chapter greatly. Thus he exhorts Saints to be looking for Christ, *Tim. 2. 13.* our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Secondly, A mind girded up is fixed in contemplation of that glory that shall be brought to them at this day of Christs appearing: see *1 Pet. 1. 13.*

Thirdly, If thy mind be girt up, it is drawn forth in praising God, and rejoycing in the hope of this day of Christs appearing, *2 Pet. 3. 14.*

Fourthly, Thoughts girded up, are humble low thoughts, not high or lifted up thoughts, of our

own selves, *Rom. 12. 16.* Not thinking high
The Second Part of Christs directions relate to
the conversation to manwards, to hold forth light in
our places,

There are five or six Circumstances in a Christi-
ans conversation that give light.

First, In good works, Charity and alms, liberality to
the poor, which the Church of *Rome* takes to be the
Oyl in our Text, and which the wise *Virgins* had, and
the foolish wanted. I must acknowledge according
to the sequel of this Chapter, in the third parable
there seems to be some ground for them so to judge;
see ver. 35, 36. for I was an hungry and ye gave
me meat, gives them admission to this glory. But I
shall not insist upon these Scriptures that seem to
favour that opinion, I shall only desire you to read
three or four Scriptures to the purpose, see *Luk.*
16. 9. And I say unto you, make you friends of the
mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail they
may receive you into everlasting habitations, *Luk. 12.*
33 Sell that you have, give alms, provide yourselves
bags that wax not old, a treasure in heaven, that fails
not, read *Tim. 6. 17, 18.* read the words and
counsel of Christ, *Mat. 5. 16.* Let your light so
shine before men, that they seeing your good works may
glorifie your Father which is in Heaven. From all which
places we may gather that Charity and good works
is a way wherein Christians have their lights burning.

Secondly, Our lights burn or shine, in hold-
ing forth the truths of Jesus Christ and the Gospel
as opportunity affords it self to us. This is that the
Apottle calls for from the *Philippians*, *Phil. 2.*
15, 16. this is called for to this end, that they might
shine as lights in the world.

Thirdly, That wherein our lights shine is in a

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circumspect observation of our duties in our particular relations; every one hath his particular work. Husbands, Wives, Masters, Servants, Parents, Children, and each in their places do either guide or stumble others by their walking: this careful walking herein will not only keep the name of God from being dishonoured and blasphemed, *1 Tim.* 6. 1. but will be a great means to adorn and beautify the Profession, *2 Tit.* 10.

Fourthly, Our lights do shine fourth in our just, righteous and faithful dealings with men, to be blameless, harmless, to keep promises, and do to others as we would have them do to us, the want hereof hath in all ages rendred Christians dark not light.

Fifthly, Our lights should shine forth in our words, there is much light held forth this way as we may gather from *Eph.* 4. 5

Sixthly, Moderation in all our enjoyments, eating, drinking, cloathing, as to joy and sorrow towards Relations, this doth demonstrate a Person rightly waiting for Christ; those who are waiting for Christ, must not exceed in these things as the old World and *Sodom* did, spoken of *Math.* 24 *Luk.* 14. see also *1 Cor.* 7. 29. this is required as the time is short, and they waiting for Christ. As to the proof of this Doctrine I shall name but two Scriptures, *Math.* 24. 44. *Be ye therefore ready:* so *Luk.* 12. 40. *Be ye also ready, for the Son of Man cometh in a day when ye looke not for him.*

But why doth our Lord require this readiness? I answer in general for our good, and the equity of it.

First, We must be ready from consideration of the suddain and swift coming of our Lord, *Mal.* 3. 2.

The Lord shall suddenly come to his Temple : Mark 13. 36. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping: 1 Cor. 15. 46. He comes in the twinkling of an eye.

Second Reason. Because none but those ready can stand before him in that day, see *Mala. 3. 2. Esa. 33. 15.* We read of a certain Creature who if he seeth a man, before the man seeth him, it is deadly; it is true in this case, for if we are not waiting for Christ and ready for him at his coming, it is deadly; for Christ to come at unawares, or when you look not for him, is very dangerous.

Third Reason. Christ may well expect from the time he gives to make ready, and he expects an improvement of time, according to time given, as he did of *Jezebel, Rev. 2. 21.*

Fourth Reason. Jesus Christ may rationally expect his should be ready, because he hath at his own charge allowed her wherewith to be ready, as *Rev. 19. 8. To her was granted (or given) that she should be arrayed.*

Fifth Reason. Jesus Christ himself is ready with all his provision, as appears from his declaration, *Math. 22. 17. All things are ready.*

Sixth Reason. There is no one thing, wherein we shew our love to Christ more than in being ready; and rather waiting for him than Christ for thee. I shall close this with a word of Use.

First Use. Be exhorted to make ready for him, have nothing to do when Christ comes, whether by death to thee, or in Person. Consider it is not enough that there is a match agreed on between Jesus Christ and thee, that thou art sure, but prepare for the Marriage. A few motives to set home this Use.

First, Consider the dreadful state of those Persons

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sons not ready, not only in our Text, but in *Math.* 22. 23. *Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness, for want of having the Wedding Garment on.*

Secondly, Consider that though many are called, yet but few are chosen, *Math.* 22. 14. *None chosen but such as are ready.*

Thirdly, Consider how well our Lord taketh it to be ready, as appears by his Carriage to such, *Luk.* 12. 17.

Fourthly, Consider how reasonable a request it is to be ready, when he is at all the cost, *Eph.* 5. 25. *Rev.* 19. 7. Thus I have done with the tenth Verse.

The eleventh and twelfth Verses. *Afterwards came also the other Virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us: 12. ver. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you I know you not.*

In these two Verses we have wrapt up the perfect and total disappointment of the foolish *Virgins*. We had the beginning of their misery in the former Verse, which lay in this that the door was shut upon them, that was a tacite or implicate rejection; but here we have their positive and declared rejection, and therefore in their irrecoverable disappointment, they are wholly denied and rejected in their vehement solicitations for entrance.

In these two Verses we have contained two general parts.

First, The foolish *Virgins* earnest petition and desire.

Secondly, The Lords reply unto them.

But in our handling these two Verses, I shall glance at these two parallel places, *Mat.* 7. *Luk.* 13. because they seem to relate to the same time, and

and are spoken to the same Persons, or such like, see *Matth. 7. 22.* They will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have not we prophesied in thy name, cast out Devils, and done many wonderful works? we have Christ's reply, ver. 23. And then will I profess I never knew them, depart from me ye that work iniquity: so *Luk. 13. 25, 26, 27.* I tell you I know you not, depart from me ye workers of iniquity: so in our Text, *Verily or Amen, I know you not:* so that in taking in those Scriptures, we have not only a petition to the Lord to open, but many arguments urged to move the Lord for entrance, but all in vain. In the petition we have considerable,

First, The matter of the request.

Secondly, We have in this petition the manner of it considerable, we have the ingemination or doubling of the word, *Lord, Lord*, which ingemination hath these four Circumstances in it.

First, Confidence.

Secondly, Earnestness.

Thirdly, Intimacy.

Fourthly, Acknowledgment.

First, Confidence in opposition to bashfulness, shame, or silence, it is a commanding authoritative speech.

Secondly, It favours of earnestness and vehemency of speaking, quickness of spirit in speaking, willing to be quickly heard and taken notice of; as when Christ so speaks to *Martha*, *Luk. 10. 41.* *Martha, Martha:* and so it is to be understood in that voice from heaven to *Saul*, *Act. 9.* *Saul, Saul:* the Lord is earnest and would be heard.

Thirdly, This kind of speaking implieth intimacy and acquaintance, it is that kind of speaking which

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which intimate friends use to each other, Christ and *Martha* was familiar, and to this purpose the rebuke given by Christ, *Luk. 6. 46. And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I speak?* as if he should say, you express intimacy and acquaintance, but do not express obedience.

Fourthly, It implies acknowledgment, as if he should say, thou art my Lord, *Math. 7.* so understood, shall say *Lord, Lord*, we own thee as our Lord; thus it must be understood *Rom. 8. 16.* we say *Abba* or *Father* by way of acknowledgment, see *John 20. My Lord, my God:* so that we see the petition hath much in it.

Secondly, if we take in the forenamed two Scriptures, we find a material Plea with strong arguments. We have five arguments used here with desire of opening and entrance.

First, (say they) we have eaten and drunk in thy presence: this eating and drinking in Christs presence is taken two ways.

First, For eating personally with Christ, when he was on earth, as *Judas* and many more bad persons did.

Secondly, By some it is taken for eating and drinking at his Table in the Church, and this latter is most likely, because Christ was ascended before this flocking in of the *Virgins*; besides there are but few can plead the first.

Secondly, Thou hast taught in our Streets, that is, we have been Sermon-hearers; by hearing Christ may be understood hearing his Ministers, so *St. Paul* speaks, *Eph. 4. 20. If you have heard Christ, and have been taught by him:* which there can not be understood Christ in Person, but his Ministers.

Thirdly, They had not only heard but taught them-

themselves, if prophesying be preaching as many understand it to be, from 1 Cor. 14.

Fourthly, They had cast out Devils possibly by fasting and prayer: casting out Devils is not enough; therefore Christ cautions his Disciples not to rejoyce in that, *Luk. 10. 20. Nevertheless rejoyce not in this that the Devils are subject to you, but rejoyce your names are written in heaven.*

The Fifth argument these *Virgins* urge is, that they had done many other mighty works. Now all these allegations and Pleas we may suppose are true, for our Lord never contradicts them as not being true, and these are considerable arguments, what not let in such, so qualified, and so related to Jesus Christ? this seems strange to them, they made no question but these arguments would have opened the door; but instead thereof, see our Lords sharp angry reply in two circumstances.

First, His absolute positive rejection of them, depart, depart, no admission, notwithstanding all this. And this rejection is built upon a double foundation.

First, He knoweth them not, which seems strange.

Secondly, They were workers of iniquity, and that is strange also considering what they pleaded here.

Now those Doctrines that I shall observe from the words thus explained, shall respect not only this Text, but those parallel places forenamed.

First Doctrine, That Persons are naturally and strongly apt to lean, bear, and lay weight upon the external duties of obedience. These several pleas are all outward, not a word of any thing inward, all outward; this was the Plea of the Jewish Church with

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with God all along, they leaned upon the Lord. *Salv*
from that ground, this was natural with the Pharisees. *take*
Luk. 18. I fast twice a week.

The Second Doctrine, The best of duties rested *Oy*
in are nauseous and abominable to God, ye are work- *S*
ers of iniquity, yet we read of no gross evils recor- *T*
ded of them. This truth is very much confirmed in *is*
Scripture, see *Esa. 1. 13, 14. My soul batesth* *con*
your solemn meetings, incense is abominable to me, Esa. *tran*
66. 3. Their Sacrifices are like offering Swines blood, *lon*
cutting off a Dogs neck, and such kind of Language. *par*

The Third Doctrine, That persons may be in *La*
the highest duties of obedience and yet workers of *and*
iniquity. *con*

The Fourth Doctrine, That workers of iniquity *ho*
may have a strong confidence, Faith and knowledge *ou*
in Christ. *be*

The Fifth Doctrine, Boldness and confidence is *W*
not alwayes a sign of a good estate. *for*

The Sixth Doctrine, A wicked or a reprobate *do*
person may be inabled by the Spirit of God, to do
great things in his name.

The Seventh Doctrine, It is a very hard matter *for*
to perswade persons that Christ does not know *po*
them. See what pains Christ takes to beat them off, *ap*
I tell you, I profess, *I know you not.* *ho*

Now all these observations are worth our consi- *ma*
deration and improvement as they are drawn from *m*
these Scriptures joyntly considered: but those which *th*
I purpose to insist upon are such as do naturally *in*
arise from these verses alone, which are as follow- *as*
eth. *er*

The First Doctrine from the words, That some *ne*
unprepared and unwise persons, shall be vehement- *vi*
ly desirous and passionately solicitous for life and
Salva-

Salvation, when too late. See the pains these persons take after their awakening.

First, They apply themselves to the wise for Oyl.

Secondly, They go to buy Oyl.

Thirdly, They come to Christ though the door is shut, yet this doth not discourage them, they come with confidence as if they could command entrance, need makes them to seek with pains, like some condemned person, begging Cordially for a pardon.

The *Use* of the Doctrine, May not this serve for a Land-mark for us to warn us to seek in earnest, and make sure in a proper time and season? Oh! come improve your little time and season, consider how sad it will be to fall into this state, as these in our Text, seek early and earnestly in time before it be too late, take *Solomons* counsel, *Eccl. 9. 10.* *What thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,* for the same reason he gives there, thou canst not do it in the grave nor after the grave.

The Second Doctrine, That many high professors shall suffer a great and total irrevocable disappointment, contrary to strong expectation, at Christs appearance; persons may live, die, rise in strong hope, and yet their hope deceive them. But what may be the ground and reason of this disappointment?

First, Mistaking those Scriptures that speak of the qualifications upon which Salvation is built, taking those Scriptures too narrow that speak of Faith, as if bare believing were enough without the powerful effects of Faith in purifying the heart and life, not taking in such Scriptures, as *Acts 15. 9.* *Purifying of the heart by Faith,* *1 John 3. 3.* Every
man

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man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, he is pure.

Second *Reas.* of this dreadful disappointment lyes in a conceit of our own doing, not disclaiming acceptance from any thing in our selves, to expect life and Salvation, and acceptance from God by Christ alone.

Third *Reas.* is for want of looking as narrowly to our hearts as lives, judging our selves for thoughts as well as actions, for we may gather that what these foolish *Virgins* plead relates to externals, not heart-work. They could not plead, thou knowest I have laboured vvith my own heart in secret, and mourned over my heart vvandrings, that it had been their Son request God would cleanse them from secret sins, & create in them a clean heart and renevv in them a right Spirit, they do not commune with their own hearts. *Psal.* 4. 4.

Fourth *Reas.* is living in some known sin, notwithstanding all their external duties of Faith and obedience, yet saith our Lord ye are workers of iniquity. *Balaam* had much of the Spirit of God to assist him in excellent Prophecies, yet had corruptness in his heart, unto whom *St. Peter* compares some professors in his day, *2 Pet.* 2.

Fifth *Reas.* is living in disobedience to some known law of Christ, and this iniquity is (*exlex*) (*ἀνομία*) against the Law, *2 Thes.* 2. 8. *Then shall that iniquity be revealed.* And that our Lord lays much upon this we may perceive if we will weigh Christs application, *Mat.* 7. 20. what we had spoken before, *whoever therefore shall hear these sayings of mine, and do them, he is the wise builder, his house shall stand.*

We now proceed to the third Doctrine, That

the great ground of Christs rejecting persons from glory with him in the last day, lyeth in his not knowing them; I know you not, I profess I never knew you; it will be a sad and dreadful state at that day not to be known of Christ.

In handling this Doctrine I shall speak to these two things.

First, What it is for Christ to know a person in that day.

Secondly, Shew you how a person may now know in himself that Christ will know him then.

First, For Christ to know a person, cannot be understood a bare knowledge, for so he knows all both good and bad, even their hearts are known to him; he knows what is in man, *John 2. 25.* but to know here must be understood, to approve, esteem a person with respect, and so it must be understood, *Exod. 1. 8.* *There arose another King that knew not Joseph,* that is, had no favour for him; and thus the World is said not to know the Saints, *1 John 3. 2.* In this sence it is that St. Paul would have the *Thessalonians* know their Preachers, *1 Thes. 5. 12.* *Know them;* and thus God is said to know the Godly, *Psal. 1. 6.* thus God is said to know *Abraham,* *Gen. 18. 19.* *For I knew him.*

Secondly, For God to know, is for him to take care and make provision: thus Christ is said to know his sheep, *John 10. 14.*

But how may a poor Soul know in himself now, that Christ will know him in that day?

First, Ask thy soul this question; dost thou know Christ? they that know him, shall be known of him; it is a matter of great concernment to know Christ rightly, *John 17. 3.* *This is life eternal to know Christ, as we ought to know him.*

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But how shall I then know that I do know him?

Ans. First, if thou knowest him as thy Saviour.

Secondly, If vve know him rightly, vve know him as our King, vve obey his Lawvs, that is more than saying, Lord, Lord, *Mat. 7. 21. 1 John 2. 4: He that saith he knoweth him and keepeth not his Commandments, is a liar.*

Thirdly, To knowv Christ, is to oovn him in sufferings; the contrary, is to be ashamed of him, and vwill incur Christs being ashamed of such at this day, *Mark 8. 38.*

Fourthly, Those that knowv Christ, knowv him in his members: for a person to say he knowvs Christ and not to knowv his Saints, is inconsistent; they that knowv not the Children of God, are emphatically called the World. Christ takes vvhat is done to his members, as done to himself, as appears *Mat. 25. 40.* And these are of those that Christ knowvs. There is more in love to the Brethren, than in casting out Devils, to oblige Christ to knowv thee.

Fifthly, Such knowv Christ vvho keep Communion vvith him, *1 John 1. 6.* and this Communion is greatly maintained by cordial and secret prayer.

Sixthly, If thou knowvest Jesus Christ, that knowledge tends to holiness, in all manner of conversation, *without holiness none can see, much less know God, Heb. 12. 14.* such as vvork iniquity cannot be said to knowv him.

Use. See of what absolute necessity knowing Christ is here in order to a hopeful expectation of Christs knowing thee at the day of his coming in Glory: labour therefore to know and be acquainted vvith

with Christ here, study the name and nature of Christ, know him in all his offices and excellencies.

I shall close this Doctrine with the words of Jesus Christ, *John 17. 3. And this is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* Thus I have finished the twelfth verse and proceed to the thirteenth verse. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

We are now come to the conclusion of this first parable which contains Christs application of the whole upon his Disciples. In this verse, we have contained two general parts.

First, A duty enjoined, *watch ye.*

Secondly, We have the Argument to inforce the duty, *for ye know not the day nor the hour when christ shall come. (Watch therefore)* because you have heard and understood how suddain and unexpected a disappointment these *Virgins* have (or rather shall have) met with, for it is to be understood to be but a parable: our Lord propounds this duty as the only way and means to prevent miscarrying, *watch therefore.* In my prosecution of this verse I shall endeavour these five things.

First, I shall explain this so great and useful duty of watchfulness, I shall shew you what our Lord means by this duty.

Secondly, I shall shew you how want of watchfulness was the foundation of the destruction of the foolish *Virgins.*

Thirdly, Shew you some reasons why Christ and his Apostles do so much call for this duty in Gospel days, and the more as the time draws near.

Fourthly, Lay down some Characters of a watchful person.

Fifthly, I shall endeavour to press our Lords words of exhortation upon Christians in this day.

To the first, what watchfulness is in it self; the word here translated watch is (*excito*) to stir up or awaken; the lowest acception of watchfulness is wakefulness, in opposition to sleeping, to keep the eyes open is a sort of watchfulness. This is plain from Christs words to his Disciples, *Mat. 26.* when he found them thus sleeping, watch saith he, that I keep your natural eyes open. This watching I dare not exclude in our Text, for if there may be excess in eating and drinking, so also there may be in sleeping, in giving way to drowsiness and sottishness. This *Solomon* inveighs much against in his Proverbs, *love not sleep lest thou come to poverty, Prov. 20. 13.* and this watching I dare not exclude, *Acts 20. 31.* to the elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, *therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn you every one night and day with tears.* St. Paul had broke his sleep to perform his duty to the Churches, and this he offers as an example for them to imitate. And this we know is the course of the world in earthly concerns; they rise betimes, and go to bed late, sometimes their Candle goeth not out by night, as we read *Prov. 31. 18.* of the industrious and prudent woman; now we are to seek for wisdom, as for silver, *Prov. 2. 3, 4.* break our sleep for it; silver seekers do so. We have the example of our Lord upon this account, who rose up a great while before day, upon a spiritual account to preach and pray, *Mark 1. 35.* and we read also of *David, Psal. 119.* he rose at midnight to pray and praise the Lord. St. Paul and

Silas did so, *Act.* 16. 25. From hence the false Church of *Rome* have their Vigils, their Night Watchers; and of this watchfulness some have experienced much spiritual profit, when the heart hath been in it; and I am sure if Persons are resolutely set for grace and glory, they would find need of this watching. But I shall bend my self to speak to the watchfulness of the inward man, as being the principal end, that without which the other cannot profit. There is a spiritual and inward sleep taken notice of in the Scriptures, some of which Scriptures I shall cite, *Rom.* 13. 11. *It is high time to awake out of sleep.* *Eph.* 5. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead.* *1 Thes.* 5. 6. *Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober:* all which Scriptures must needs relate to the inward watchfulness I speak of; this sleep is when our spiritual senses are asleep: for as the natural body hath its senses, so the inward man hath his senses according to *H. b.* 5. have their senses exercised. There are five senses relating to the inward Man, Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Feeling, Tasting; but I shall but name this, because I touched upon it before. This watchfulness consists in three Circumstances.

First, Observation.

Secondly, Exercise.

Thirdly, Expectation.

First, Observation; where the mind and understanding, eye and affection are looking out, this is watching, *Hab.* 2. 1. *I will set me upon my watch-tower, to see:* there his observation is called watching: see *Jerem.* 20. 10. *They watch for my falling;* that is, observe: thus it is said the Jews

watched to kill St. Paul, that is, sought opportunity, *Act. 9. 24.*

Secondly, A watch implies industry, exercise of means; thus it must be understood of the Master of the house, *Matth. 24. 43. He would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken*: he would have been awake; both exercising his weapon to defend and offend: barely keeping his eyes open, would not have hindered him breaking in; watching is an industrious work; see how St. Paul speaks to the Church of the *Corinthians, 1 Cor. 16. 13. Watch, ye stand fast, quit your selves like men, be strong*: so also to Timothy, *2 Tim. 4. 5. Watch thou, and endure affliction*; these go together.

Thirdly, Watching supposeth expectation, earnest looking out with longing, thus to be understood, *Luk. 12. which I have touched before, so Psal. 130. 5, 6. I wait for the Lord*; watching and waiting are the same many times in Scripture. Thus I have briefly opened the nature of this duty of watchfulness, it is a wakeful, observing, industrious, expecting frame of Spirit.

The second thing that I am to speak unto is this, How this want of watchfulness was the foundation of the miscarrying of the foolish *Virgins.*

I answ. That the foundation of their miscarriage did not consist in not opening their eyes, but in the want of a painful use of means, herein they were short; they were slothful in a time of harvest, when they might have furnished themselves; they sought when it was to late: and that this was the ground of their miscarriage, will appear plainly from the next Parable; the whole scope whereof is to encourage industry before Christ come; the Oyl, the Wedding Garment is the fruit of industry;

dustry; these foolish *Virgins* had not been in good earnest for heaven, with violence and with their might, they did not seek wisdom as for silver, if they had, they should have found, *Prov. 8. 17.*
They that seek me early shall find me.

Though Persons seeking the world and earthly things may miss, though they seek early and earnestly; yet those that seek the kingdom of heaven so, shall not miss of it; we have many promises to that.

Thirdly, Why is this duty of watchfulness so much called for, and prest in Gospel days?

First, Because Jesus Christ foresaw, this would be wanted when there should be most need; and that slumbring and sleeping should prevail greatly in such a day.

Secondly, Because then the coming of Christ draws near, that was the argument the Apostle useth to awake the *Romans*, *Rom. 13. 12.* the near approach of their salvation.

Thirdly, Because our great adversary is more than ordinary vvatchful in those days, see *1 Pet. 3. 7.* *Rev. 12. Because he bath but a short time.*

Fourthly, The latter days are full of snares, gins, traps, and temptations to catch souls; nowv this duty rightly performed in conjunction vvith prayer, is the only means to antidote a soul from those snares, *Luk. 21. 35, 36.* *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth.*

Watch therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The fourth thing I am to speak to in the prosecution

cution of this Doctrine, is to lay down some Characters of a vvakeful Person.

First, A vvakeful Person tastes much sweetness in the promises of God, as a healthful man can taste his food. As an unregenerate man, so a declining sleepy Professor is a stranger to the covenants and promises, *Eph. 2. 12.* they are to him as food to one whose heart is asleep. When *David* was in a lively state and frame of Spirit, see how sweet was the contemplation of future promises to him, see *2 Sam. 7. ver. 18. to 22.* so also *Chap. 25. 5.* *He hath made with me a sure Covenant ordered in all things: David* feeds on the promises as a hungry man doth upon his food; and indeed God hath given out many precious promises to the end they might be strong consolation.

Secondly, A watchful vvakeful Person is sensible of the least sin, though but in thought; his conscience is tender, can feel the least prick of sin; whereas one asleep can bear great sins insensibly: sin to a lively heart is like poyson in a *Venus* glass, it cannot entertain it, he hates the Garment spotted with the flesh, he hates the very appearance of evil.

Thirdly, A vvakeful Person is constant in duties, he keeps true stroke, his works are perfect; one in a drowsie and watchless state is not constant in duty, an Hypocrite or drowsie Professor doth not pray always nor keep to duty always. The Church in *Sardis* when her works were not perfect, she had need to be exhorted to watchfulness, *Rev. 2. 2.* *Be watchful and strengthen the things which be ready to die, for I have not found thy works perfect before God:* a Person asleep strikes imperfect strokes.

Fourthly, A watchful Person holds fast his Profession

Chaffession in the outward ordinances of Christ, as his Garment; a Person drowsie or asleep lets fall his Garment, the Spirit of God makes watching taste and keeping the Garment coteremporary, *Rev. 16.* *15. Be watchful and keep thy Garment:* when *Noah* was asleep he had dropt his Garment and lay naked in his Tent.

Fifthly, A watchful Person experienceh increase of strength against his own iniquity, so did *David* *Psal. 18.* he is seldom overcome by them, this is the means that Christ directs unto *Math. 26.* *watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*

Sixthly, A wakeful Person delights in lively spiritual Company and Society, it is his great delight to be in their Company; whereas a drowsie Person is burthened with them: But I would but touch these things because I spake something to this particular before.

I now proceed to the fifth particular which is to press this Use of exhortation upon Christians. Would you not be repulsed at the last day, as these were? then here lyeth your duty, which is to watch, be in good earnest, do your work sure. Which if you would be found effectually in it, you must watch and observe narrowly three enemies.

First, Your selves.

Secondly, The Devil.

Thirdly, The World.

First, Watch your selves, and that in three respects.

First, What we do.

Secondly, What we say.

Thirdly, What we think.

First, Let us weigh our actions by the balance of

of the sanctuary; the deeds of the body must be taken notice of, for there is great danger, if not good deeds, *Rom. 8. 13.* we live or die according to them, *If we through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, we shall live; if we live after the flesh, we shall die.*

Secondly, We must narrowly watch our words, remember what Christ says, *Math. 12. 36, 37.* Of every idle word men must give an account: by their words they shall be justified or condemned. *David* prays for Gods help herein, *Psa. 141. 3.* *Set thou a watch before my Mouth, keep the door of my Lips.*

Thirdly, We must observe our thoughts, they are not free as some say; no, herein lyeth part of our fitness for Christ in girding up our minds or thoughts, as you have heard from *Luk. 12. 35.* *1 Pet. 1. 13.* the heart is to be kept with all diligence, *Prov. 3. 24.*

Secondly, We must observe Satan; it was the commendation of the Churches that they were not ignorant of the depths and devices of Satan, and it is our duty to be strong in Gods might against him; this is that we are exhorted to, *1 Pet. 5. 8, 9.*

Thirdly, We must be circumspect in our observation of this present evil world, which also is a great and prevailing enemy to the Saints if not narrowly watched; she hath a double influence upon us.

First, By threatnings and frowns.

Secondly, By her smiles and allurements; both very dangerous, which made *Agar* pray, *That he might have neither poverty nor riches*, knowing they were both snares, *Prov. 30. 6.* and many strong ones have fallen by this enemy; and that

Satan

Satan might tempt our Lord himself prevailingly, (this is his great temptation,) *Math. 4.* he shews him the Kingdoms of this World and the glory of them, with promise to give them if he would worship him: doubtless Satan thought he could not choose a likelier means to destroy the Lord of life; though the Lord Christ was well able to deliver himself from the power of it, yet many are conquered and subdued by this allurements: We read of *Demas* an eminent Preacher of the Gospel, and Companion with *St. Paul*, is taken hereby, *2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*

But Secondly, I would press this Use of exhortation given by Christ, from his own argument, *For ye know not the day nor hour when the Son of Man shall come*: certainly this is a consideration that Christ would fain fasten upon his Disciples minds in order to the duty of watchfulness, and therefore we have it repeated over again and again, you may see *Math. 24.* three times in that Chapter, ver. 36. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man,* ver. 42. *Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come,* ver. 44. *In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.* *Mark 13. 32, 33.* This is a secret lockt up in the breast of the Father alone, this is not known to Angels, no not to Christ himself, but the Father only, ver. 36. therefore when Christs Disciples would have known the time, Christ only gives them predictions and forerunners, not a precise time; and when the Disciples asked Christ again, *Act. 1. 7.* it is not (saith he,) for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath kept in his own hands.

Quest. But why may not Christs Disciples know

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the day and hour, and why is it so inculcated upon them as afore said?

First, Because he would not have persons pry into it, God would not have man to pry into his secrets of Christs Second coming, *Deut. 29. 19. Secret things belong to God*, this is one of them. There hath been a double evil amongst men in the Apostles times concerning his coming, some put the day too far from them, as those *2 Pet. 3.* others brought it too near, as those *2 Thes. 2.* now to prevent both, our Lord would not have us busie our selves too nicely about it, telling of us, the knowledg is not attainable.

Secondly, It is thus reiterated and inculcated, the uncertainty of Christ coming, that we might always be ready for it; this is the scope of our Text, therefore persons in general have their deaths concealed, that they may with *Job*, *all their appointed time wait till their change come.* The Thief doth not use to tell when he will come, which calleth upon the house-holder to be always ready, and provided for him, which is Christs Argument to his Disciples.

Object. But doth not Christ seem to intimate, *Luk. 21. 30, 31, 32.* that his disciples may as easily know his coming and day, as the Husbandman may know when Summer is near?

I Answer, he may know the season in general, not the day or hour; so a man that grows grey may judge death is near, but he knows not the day nor hour, nor you neither, in which he shall dye: so we in like manner may judge our Lords coming is not far off this day, by those forerunners which are as the grey hairs preceeding a mans death.

Use. We have two things implied in this verse,

First,

First, That Christ comes, when he cometh, suddenly.

Secondly, When he comes, he comes as the Son of man: the consideration of both which may be profitable to us that we may so look for him.

First, As coming suddenly.

Secondly, As coming as the Son of man. So I have done with the thirteenth verse and with the first Parable.

We now proceed to vers. 14, 15. *For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far Contry, who called unto him his own Servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15. verse. And unto one he gave five Talents, to another two, and to another one; to every one according to his several ability, and straightway took his Journey.*

Our Lord Jesus was much affected with this parabolical speaking when he was on earth: we find him laying down eight Parables in one Sermon of his, *Mat. 13.* if we take in one omitted by *Mat.* taken in by *Mark 4. 26.* and indeed he was so frequent in this kind of speaking that it is said, without a parable spake he not, *Mat. 13. 34.* and he knew this was a profitable speaking, no way like this to insinuate and command the Judgment and affections. There are two original words to signify a parable; the first word, as the learned tells us, signifies to rule or to govern as a Prince, others derive the original word which we render parable from a Root which signifies to be like, or make like (*הוה*) which agreeth with the Greek (*παροιμία*) parable; therefore this was the very way that Nathan took with David, when he had sinned, by the Parable of the Eyre Lamb, *2 Sam. 12.* this ruled

ruled him and overcame him. Every Parable is made up of three Circumstances.

First, The Kind or bark, the word in which it is spoken.

Secondly, The root and occasion of it.

Thirdly, The moral and application of it, which is the chief thing that we are to inquire after in a Parable, what it teacheth us.

We are now come to our Lords second Parable contained in this Chapter, which is the Parable of the Talents, repeated also by *Luk.* chap. 19. And this Parable seems to rise from a double root; we take in *Luke* which is a Parallel place to this: *Luk.* 19. Christ seems to answer to a secret thought arising in their hearts from some what fore-spoken by our Lord, from whence they gathered that his Kingdom should immediately appear; see *Luk.* 19. 11. which to take off he tells them he must first take a great Journey to receive it.

Secondly, Taking this Parable according to our Context *Mat.* 25. the great scope and design of it is, to provoke to industry in his absence. If any should question or be at a loss in themselves, for what cause the foolish *Virgins* were excluded, Christ doth in this following Parable powerfully assert, that the ground of their loss and disappointment lay here, that they did not improve the stock committed to them to trade with, for idleness, not for spending but hiding what they were intrusted with. (*The Kingdom of Heaven*) These words are not in the original in most Copies extant, yet it may be judged a rational and necessary supplement because it agrees with the first verse of this Chapter, and is the preface of most other Parables, see *Mat.* 13. Kingdom of Heaven, it is that unto which those things may answer.

But

But I shall omit speaking unto this preface, partly because I have spoken to it before, upon ver. 1. and partly because it is not in the original Text.

We now proceed to the words which are a Parable, and in this Parable we have eight circumstances considerable.

First, The Journey taken.

Secondly, The end for which, according to *Luk.*

Thirdly, We have the house set in order, for his absence.

Fourthly, We have the behaviour of his Servants in his absence.

Fifthly, We have the return of the Master.

Sixthly, The reckoning called for by the Master.

Seventhly, The reward of the industrious and faithful.

Eighthly, The severe punishment of the slothful Servant.

These are the considerable parts of this Parable which I shall speak unto as I proceed.

But before I come closely to this Parable, give me leave to inquire into these four things relating to this Parable.

First, Who is this man.

Secondly, What is this Journey.

Thirdly, Who be these Servants.

Fourthly, What are the Talents or goods.

Ans. It is agreed on all hands, that this man is Jesus Christ who is called the Son of man in the verse before, and frequently in Scripture is so called. Christ in his judging the World is a man, *Act. 17.* the man Christ Jesus, *2 Tim. 2. 5.*

Secondly, That this Journey is his Ascension from

from earth to Heaven, is also agreed on all hands which Journey he hath not accomplished till comes again.

Thirdly, His Servants are his Disciples, not extraordinary Disciples, but his ordinary Disciples, his Servants in ordinary, his *Manual* Servants, call here his own Servants, in opposition to the Servants of *Satan*, and the World, alluding to the Parable; not the Servants of another Master, his own proper Servants who had given up themselves to him, and indefinitely considered, not only Preachers

Fourthly, What these talents are; men are exceeding extravagant, some think the Ten Commandments; some the Five Books of *Moses*; some the Five Senses; I shall not spend time to trouble you at all with the Judgments of men about them: a Talent as to weight considered is very great, bears 187 pound.

I shall offer my own opinion about this which is this; The Talents or Pounds are those several abilities, endowments, and intrustments each member of the Church and Body of Christ hath committed unto them, for the good of the whole: some have riches, some have wisdom, some rule, some more, some less; and for the confirmation of my opinion, I would have the Reader consider these Scriptures following, see *Mark. 13. 34.* a parallel place to this, *The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his Servants, and to every one his work, and commanded the Porters to watch:* in which words we have the Talents or goods under other terms; every man his work, stand thou here, stand thou there, and to the Porter stand thou at the door; the Second Scripture is *Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8.*

Having

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophesie, let us prophesie according to the proportion of faith, or Ministry, let us wait on our Ministering, or him that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation, he that giveth let him do it in simplicity, he that ruleth with diligence, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness. See also Eph. 4. 8. When Christ ascended up on high, which is this Journey in our Text, he gave gifts unto them, some one gift, some another, the improvement of which is required. The Church is resembled unto mans body, having many members, and each member his office in the body, so God hath tempered the Church, 1 Cor. 12. See also 1 Pet. 4. 10. as every man hath received the gift, even so let him Minister, whether in Doctrine or Charity. Christ hath set some in his house as rulers, others to be ruled, see Mat. 24. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Master hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season, blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing: herein is the improvement of his Talent, and renders him one of the blessed: we have the same words repeated by Luk. 12. 42, 43.

Object. But some may say, doth not St. Luke ch. 19. seem to represent the Talents to be of the same species or kind while he speaks of pounds? they had ten pounds as they were ten Servants, each Talent there is a like species and number.

Ans. First, We must not be too strict as to the shell, and external words of a Parable. A Parable is considerable only as to the scope, and drift, and moral of it, not every Circumstance.

Secondly, This one single Scripture must not be

set in opposition to seven or eight Scriptures, which speak otherwise, as those which I have laid before you, where we find Christs gifts to differ and all to be of one species or number; also *Mat.* *Rom.* 12. *Eph.* 4. *1 Cor.* 12. *1 Pet.* 4. and many more of like import, that Christians have different gifts, which our experience teacheth to be true.

Thirdly, As to this word, *Luk.* 19. *Γραναίον* (*μνᾱς*) (Latin *Mina*) pound signifies a poile or weight indefinitely, as it refers to weight sometimes, a large sum of money, sometimes (*μνᾱς*) it refers to measure as well as weight, a parcel of Land containing 122 foot square, now whether this weight be the same to each person, because set out by the same, (*μνᾱς*) is a question. But the main thing is a Parable as I told you before is the scope, now the scope of the Parable, *Mat.* and *Luk.* agree.

First, They all agree that Christ is ascended and gone this Journey, before he reign or receive his Kingdom.

Secondly, The three Evangelists do agree that Christ at his going this his Journey, doth not break up House-keeping (as we call it,) but leaves his business going in his absence in the hands of his Servants.

Thirdly, They all agree, that each of Christs Servants have intrustments from their Master at his going away.

Fourthly, They agree that the Servants in their improvements differ greatly.

Fifthly, They agree as to the large rewards of the faithful and profitable Servants, and also of the slothful.

Sixthly, Some are of opinion that the reason why *Matthew* and *Luke* differ in the manner of their relation,

whom, is because that *Luke* speaks of the ordinary
and lower sort of Servants, and *Matthew* of the A-
ngels, of the highest order; but I think there is lit-
tle in this opinion because we have him with one
talent in our Text. I now proceed to the Obser-
vations in our Text.

We have ten remarkable Doctrines in these two
Verses.

1 *Doct.* That Christs Ascension from earth
to Heaven, (even in his own apprehension) doth
very much resemble a great mans going a long Journey:
it is not compared to a poor mans, a mean mans
going, a man of small concerns in the World,
but a great man, having a great family, many Ser-
vants, and great concerns to take order about; this
man is a great man, called a Lord, called a noble
man, *Luk.* 19. and going a great Journey, to be a
long time absent, which calls for some considera-
ble preparation; therefore it is said he abode forty
days after his resurrection, *Act.* 1. settling his af-
fairs, he had several meetings with his Disciples a-
bout those things.

2 *Doct.* That Jesus Christ in taking this great
and long Journey, doth not dissolve his Servants,
and break up house-keeping, but settles his business
in the hands of his Servants successively in his ab-
sence, he appoints each Servant his place, and work
in his House: this house is to be understood his
Church, Christs house is as firmly settled, and hath
his Authority with it as bindingly as if he were
himself present.

3 *Doct.* That those Servants that Christ doth in-
trust, are not his extraordinary, but his ordinary,
and *Manual* or hand Servants, called here his own or
proper Servants, to them he commits his goods.

4 *Doct.* That Christs intrustments with such Servants, are very great and weighty, set out Talents; five times 187 to one Servant, twice 187 to a Second, once 187 to the lowest; called according to the Greek, his substance or goods.

5 *Doct.* That there are left by Christ in his house sufficient gifts and abilities for the effectual carrying on, and management of his affairs in his house in his absence. Though Christ be in Heaven, yet he is greatly concerned as to his house on Earth that his trade and business be well managed: there is no want of means in order to the completing his work.

6 *Doct.* That every Persons gifts and abilities from Christ are not the same, though Christs own Servants, some are intrusted more, some less, some twice as much as others, this may not be a ground of discouragement to Persons so intrusted.

7 *Doct.* In giving gifts Christ hath an eye to Persons abilities; it is said, to every man according to their abilities, some cannot use or manage what others can; the Porter had not the same abilities as the Steward or Ruler of the Family.

8 *Doct.* The whole concerns of Christ in the World are committed into the hands of Christs own Servants resident in his house or Church; would you trade for Christ or Glory? apply yourselves to his house, there are his Correspondents. If any have Ears to hear, let them hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

9 *Doct.* The very highest Christians stock in heavenly affairs is not their own, it is but lent by Christ, therefore they have no cause to boast if they had not received it: therefore Christ is but said

to receive his *Own with Usury*, ver. 27. it is his own, and the product of his own.

10 *Doct.* That Jesus Christ upon this Journey repositeth great trust in his Servants; no sooner had Christ committed his substance to his Servants, but straightway took his Journey, he is so satisfied in what he hath done.

Now I might speak distinctly to each of these Doctrines, and indeed they are all very well worth our consideration, but I study brevity: therefore I shall speak two words.

First, One to Christ's House.

Secondly, One word to those who are not yet of Christ's house.

But before I come to speak particularly to these, let me Answer one Question.

Who or what people are Christ's house here on earth?

Ans. Baptized Believers are Christ's house: they were those with whom he left his orders with, when he went away, and must needs be so still; and it is strange any should question this truth, were not all Christ's Servants brought into his house this way? Is not this Christ's Law to all his Servants? Read but seriously the proceedings of Christ's own Servants immediately after the Master was gone, *Act. 2. 47.* by Baptism, *The Lord added to his Church daily such as should be saved:* and who hath had power from Christ since to alter this his way? But I design brevity. As an exposition, I shall only speak a few words by way of Use to the whole of the former Doctrines.

Use. First, To Christ's house; consider that though your Master be in Heaven, yet his Eye is over you continually; he searcheth the heart and

and tryeth the reins of his Churches ; therefore all things in his house, in his fear.

Secondly, Do all in his name, by his power and authority in his house : Do not all the Ministers or Servants in the furthest part of this Kingdom Dominions, act in his name in what they do and it is as powerful and binding as if he did himself in Person : even so whatever Christs Servants do according to their Commission he owneth it, and it is as if he had done it himself : *Math. 18.* about Excommunication, it is bound in Heaven.

Thirdly, Receive all your rules, orders, and directions, in the management of the affairs in his house, from his orders left with you ; for though he is at a great distance, the house is his, he is your Master and Lord, and head of his Church.

Fourthly, Let every one in Christs house observe their work, stand where Christ hath set them ; be subject to those whom Christ hath given authority ; for he hath given authority to his Servants. *Mark 13.* Some are made rulers to give the rest *their Meat in due season* ; and in disobeying them in lawful Commands, you disobey Christ, *Math. 10. 40.* *He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that rejecteth Christs Servants in place, rejecteth him.*

2 Use. To those not yet of Christs house.

First, Have a special care of slighting Christs house or Servants, because the Master is not with them ; all slights and injuries to them is taken as if done to their Master, and highly provoking to him.

Secondly, If you would know any thing concerning the mind of Christ, repair to his house, he hath left his mind there, and thither he sends

that want instructions and help heaven-ward: see in the business of *Saul*, though Christ spoke from heaven to him, *Act. 9.* he doth not direct him from thence in particular, but sendeth him to the City to receive directions from *Ananias*, and sends *Ananias* to *Saul*: so it was in the case of *Cornelius*, *Act. 10.* Christ sends him to *St. Peter* that he might receive directions from him; not now from the Master, but the Servants belonging to the house.

3 *vse.* Know this, that what rules and orders Christ gave to and left with his Church, is for the whole time of his absence; and he looks to find his house in the same order he left it in, when he went away: therefore in the two great Ordinances of the Gospel, Baptism and the Lords Supper, we find their Period at Christs return at the end of the World. *Math. 28. 20. I am with you in Baptizing to the end of the World.* *1 Cor. 11. 26. Ye remember the Lords death till he come:* the Church and house of Christ hath its being in all Ages, *Eph. 3. 21.* therefore if you have an Ear to hear, you are to hear what the Spirit saith to the Church in this day, as well as formerly in that day immediately after his Ascension to Heaven: know this, that all the visible power that Christ hath in the World at this day, is only that power he hath in his Church; and know also (whatever you may think,) that the Church is the only receptacle of Persons in order to happiness and glory hereafter: Christ gathers from thence those that shall be eternally rewarded, and enter into their Masters Joy: well, Christ is yet upon his Journey, but his return draws near. So I have briefly done with the 14 and 15 Verses.

We now come to verse 16. *Then he that had received the five Talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five Talents.* 17. verse. *And likewise he that received two, gained also other two.* 18. verse. *But he that received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lords money.*

In these three verses, we have contained the behaviour of Christs own Servants, who were intrusted with his goods in his absence, which was the fourth head propounded, as to this Parable, into eight particular heads.

First, The Journey taken.

Secondly, The end, to receive a Kingdom.

Thirdly, The settling his house in order for his Journey.

Fourthly, The carriage and behaviour of his Servants in his absence.

Fifthly, The Lords return.

Sixthly, The account required.

Seventhly, The reward given to the industrious.

Eighthly, The certain reward given to the slothful, *Cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* ver. 30. I have already shewn from the former heads, that our Lord Christ did at once at his going away, settle his house in such order as he would have it abide in, in his absence, and requires to find it when he comes again. Now in this fourth head, we have a relation (Parabolically) from Christs Infallible foresight and knowledge of the proceedings and carriages of his Servants (his own peculiar Servants) when he is gone, as to the improvement of their Masters estate in their hands; that they kept house is taken for granted, they did not throw the doors off the hooks and dissolve house keeping, this is not by Christ sup-

posed

posed they will do in his absence, but they kept his house, and their evil was that they were not universally faithful and industrious, some were eye Servants, and were lazy in their masters absence. As in the former Parable we find in one Society wise and foolish Virgins, so here in his house shall be found faithful and wise, slothful and foolish Servants, as afterwards we find Goats amongst the Sheep, and must be severed when Christ himself the great Shepherd shall come. Our Lord himself who knew what was in man, intrusted some who afterwards proved very bad, idle and slothful, fearful and unbelieving.

We know that amongst Christs Servants, in his absence, amongst his twelve there was one intrusted who was unfaithful, Judas by name, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you, saith Christ, is a Devil,* a wicked covetous person, a Son of perdition? This preface may teach two sorts of persons, two lessons.

First, Those who are observers of Church members do not condemn the Church or house of Christ, because there are bad persons in it; a very good Master may have very bad Servants, especially in his absence; it is no certain rule to judge the way by the persons that own it, no though Preachers there may be such, it is not sufficient to judge by: you read *Mat. 13.* in the Parable of the Drag-net, there are brought in bad and good, and the time to sever, is when the Lord comes, who shall reveal the hidden things of darkness.

Secondly, To Church members, Christs Servants, this consideration may serve to awaken and rouse them to inquire into their estate, and not to trust to their Church membership, as if that would secure

secure them. Some especially Preachers are apt to think they are owned and approved by God to be faithful, because intrusted with the work of Preaching; we see that some that prophesied in Christs name, cast out Devils, are condemned by him to the lowest place and severest punishments. Before I come to speak to these three verses, I shall explain two words in our Text, First, what is here to be understood by trading.

Secondly, What by money.

I Ans. First in general, the whole is a Parable, the design of which is to set out Heavenly things by earthly; therefore it is no wonder, though Christ speaks like men in earthly affairs, of money and trading.

Sometimes it is taken for bodily labour, the word (*εργασια*) translated, traded, is drawn from a Root that signifies business, buying, selling, negotiating in merchandizing, and commonly taken for merchandizing; for it is not so properly labour of body, though sometimes so taken, as labour, of body and mind: but as I said before it is most properly taken for buying, and selling; so taken in *Josephs* instructions to his Brethren, see *Gen.* 46. 32, 33. *their trade hath been in Cattel*, or as the *Heb.* men of Cattel; such as bought, sold, and bred up Cattel; such as we call Grasiere: so *Eze.* 27. it is plain that buying and selling in Fairs, is called trading: So it must be understood, *Rev.* 18. *All that trade by Sea*. So that when Christ saith here, they went and traded, he alludeth to Traffick, to profit, not only labour as a Horse, or fool, but continuance in it with design of mind, to gain. Our Lords great design in these three verses is to provoke and stir up his Servants to industry: the word money is derived from (*pecunia*) hath affinity

affinity with the Hebrew (כסף) Coin that passes among men, of Gold, Silver, brass, or Leather, if it pass in buying; sometimes it is applyed to goods, Household-stuff and the like: it is another word, *Gen.* 17. 12. 31. 15. 42. 25. *Exod.* 21. 21. Where the Servants is said to be his money, (כסף) *argentum* called goods or substance, before *in manu*, That which may stand by it self, a single Lot or part. But what is this money that he hid?

1 Ans. That which his Master intrusted him with to trade with, his *Talent*, whatever his gift was: for it is spoken in a borrowed speech, money, because that men trade with.

But for our more orderly proceeding, I shall sum up the whole in these three verses, into these five Doctrines.

1 Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ hath a trade going, and managed in his absence, *he went and traded.*

2 Doct. All Christs good and faithful and acceptable Servants are traders, or Merchant men, men of business.

3 Doct. That Christs trade, the Heavenly trade well managed, turns to great profit, to Master and Servant.

4 Doct. All Christs gifts or *Talents*, are given for use, as well the least as the greatest.

5 Doct. There are some of Christs own intrusted Servants, who do not improve what they receive.

The first of these Doctrines I shall pass by, because I have spoken to it before; only remember I then spoke of it, as Christs appointment, but now as their answer; they went and traded: these are faithful, and are found following their Masters directions, as we have it, *Luk.* 19. 13. *πρωτα δὲ ἀποβάντες*

negoti-

negotiamini, occupate, till I come as before to Traffick in Merchandizing.

- 2 *Doct.* That all Christs faithful acceptable Servants are traders. This appears because they are all liable to account. Christ when he comes calleth all to account, what they had gained by trading, *Luk. 19. 15.* and he that had received one Talent, as well as he that had received five. St. Paul reckons himself and those with him, *Phil. 3. 20.* traders this way driving a Heavenly trade, *Our Conversation is in Heaven*, the word *πολιτευμεν*, business, freedom of trade imports Commerce with a correspondent at a distance, we have liberty of trade as Freemen. That which I shall first do in prosecution of this Doctrine, shall be to shew how a true and faithful Servant of Christ, when he is as Christ would have him to be, doth fitly resemble the highest sort of traders, Merchants in ten particulars.

A true Servant of Christ bears resemblance to the highest sort of traders in ten circumstances.

First, He knows the worth of the commodity he trades in; what ever others do that are out of the way of that trade, he well knows the worth of the Pearl, *Math. 13. 46.*

Secondly, He is venturesome, not timorous and fearful in laying out his money in that Commodity: the skilful Merchant is as free and willing to lade his Ship, as he is to unliver it.

Thirdly, He is endued with patience, to wait the return of a long Voyage; he doth not repine because his Ship to the *Indies* doth not return in Five or Six Months; he hath patience to wait for a good, and bear a bad return; he doth not knock off trading because he hath had a loss, though great; but goeth on still in his trade: from hence

it

it is that the trading Woman, *Prov. 31. 17.* is said to have her loins girt with strength, she is not afraid of the snow or cold, she is armed for it, ver. 21.

Fourthly, The highest sort of traders many times straiten themselves to enlarge their trade, straiten their home occasions, to venture largely afar; he takes up goods, borrows mony to cast upon the waters, to send out of sight for the present: Of these Merchants we read in the Parable, *Math. 13. 44.* selleth all he hath, to purchase the hidden Pearl, and ver. 45, 46. the Merchant, *that hath found one Pearl, sells all he hath to buy it.* The Pearl is at a distancee; yet a true Merchant, a trader ventures for it; a true Christian Servant of Christ, may bear the name of the highest sort of Traders Merchants, so called in the former Parable.

Fifthly, Great Traders are accustomed to and acquainted with trusting, they trade for time, three Months, six Months, nine Months, they trade upon Credit or Faith; and such great Traders have a way of insuring what they venture: this is their refuge, I will (say they) insure; and let me say this to Christians, no trade like Christs trade for trusting, no trade so sure as to its returns; here Men have need sometimes to insure their insurers; they need not do so who trade heavenwards, their insurer is able and faithful.

Sixthly, As the highest Traders deal in large quantities of the Commodity, fill Ware-houses, and whole Ships: So the Trader under Christ deals large, large in his endeavours, large in his Prayers, aims, and expectations. When *Solomon* speaks of that Merchant Woman, *Prov. 31.* he speaks of her as compassing great things; she considers and
buys

buys a Field, she plants a Vineyard: she is not content only in her lower domestick affairs, but launches out abroad.

Seventhly, As the highest of Traders, so a Trader under Christ trades at a great distance; he findeth that it is most profitable in its return, though long: an *India* Voyage saith the Merchant, is better than three or four nearer Voyages; a Christian drives his trade at a great distance in Heaven. *St. Paul* was one of those Traders, *Phil. 3. 20. his Conversation, his Trade,* (as the word will bear) *is in Heaven:* It is said of the former Merchant Woman, *Pro. 31. she fetcheth her food from far.*

Eighthly, As the highest sort of trades on earth to foreign parts at a great distance, have their Correspondent there, who trades there in their behalf, who negotiates for them in their absence, and sends them their effects and products: even so a Christian that trades in Heaven, hath his Correspondent there who is acting there for him, even *Jesus Christ* who is entred into Heaven for that purpose.

Ninthly, All this trade is driven with mature consideration, and deliberate counsel, they must be wise men that drive this great trade, such as through experience are encouraged, such (as *Solomon* saith) *Who have their eyes in their head,* a fool will not be a Merchant adventurer, he loves to see what he hath before him.

Tenthly, This trade thus driven brings in great profit. Are not those Merchants most rich who trade largest and furthest? this trade for Christ brings thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold in return. Merchants sometimes makes *cent. per cent.*

There

There are three choice commodities that Christs intrusted Servants trade in, vent and venture.

First, Making known the truths of Christ in the Gospel in order to Salvation.

Secondly, Charity and Alms.

Thirdly, Sufferings for Christ, and the Gospel. These are stable commodities, which being rightly managed, never fail of a profitable return.

A word or two to each of these.

First, A word or two to the *Talent* of knowledge in the Scriptures; and indeed I might be large upon this head, were I not designed to be brief in the whole.

Now though all Christs Servants are not intrusted alike herein; yet I am perswaded that there is not one living member of Christs house that is not intrusted with some measure of this kind, namely a word that might be profitable, though women: *Priscilla* as well as *Aquila*, capable to instruct an *Apollos*, *Acts* 18. 26. *St. Paul* writing to the Church of *Philippi*, ch. 2. indefinitely exhorts them *to shine as lights, and to hold forth the word of life*, and *St. Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 4. exhorts *as many as had received the gift, he should minister therein*. The Apostle supposeth all had not received alike, yet each had some gift of this kind which ought to be brought forth as occasion is offered.

Now this *Talent* is of great use to the world rightly managed. It is true that some are by the providence of God called to larger opportunities, yet each at one time or other have an opportunity, if they have a heart to speak, something in order to the inlightning the World, and there is a duty incumbent on them to express their Charity to their neighbour, and not to hide this *Talent* in a *Napkin*.

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There

There is an opportunity at one time or other for more weak Christians, if I may speak in the words of *Elisha* (*Job* 32.) to shew their opinion; but we must be careful to observe our time as he did; the Text saith, he waited till his elders had spoken first what they had to say. And see how acceptable this modest forbearance was to God, *Elisha* is not in the least blamed, he was no forwarder.

There are two extreams amongst persons in this respect, some will not declare what they know, not at any time, either out of too much modesty, or else from fear of displeasure from those they speak unto.

Others there are that are too forward and pragmatical to thrust forward themselves, when they are not justly called to it, but possibly the matter might be better managed by others;

If we would therefore manage and improve our *Talent* rightly to Gods glory, and the good of others;

We must observe these rules in our speaking.

First, Be sure thou speak, when if thou dost not speak for God and truth, none else will. It was a proverbial speech amongst the Hebrews, Where there is not a man, there be thou a man: which may be applied to this case, when truth will suffer if they be silent, be sure thou speak.

Secondly, When thou openest thy mouth to speak, speak from the honesty and sincerity of thy heart, not from the height of thy Spirit, not out of pride, and vain glory, but from these ends.

First, To instruct the ignorant.

Secondly, To reduce those that are out of the way.

Thirdly, To feed those that are hungry.

Fourthly, To strengthen those that are weak.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, To confirm those that are feeble and doubting.

Sixthly, To comfort those that are sorrowful.

Seventhly, To incourage those that are fearful.

Eighthly, To provoke those that are slothful.

Ninthly, In all to gods Glory.

When these are thy ends in speaking, or any one of these ; it is a sign of an honest heart.

There are grounds that commonly hinder Persons improving this Talent.

First, Slothfulness and idleness, not willing to trouble themselves.

Secondly, Bashfulness, shamefacedness, want of heart and courage, this is as bad as being too forward.

Thirdly, Some out of fear lest they should bring themselves into trouble or procure ill will to themselves from others : *David* was of another mind, *Psal.* 34. 11. also *Psal.* 66. 16. *He will teach and tell what God hath done for his soul* : *St. Paul* was one that declared the whole Counsel of God, not fearing what might follow : so did *St. Peter* and *St. John*, *Act.* 4. *We cannot but speak what we have seen and heard* : for we were not born for our selves, or intrusted with life for our selves, *Rom.* 14. 7. *no man liveth to himself* : If any of us be instructed with knowledg in the truths of Christ, we are intrusted with a Talent, and the Master expects the improvement, that he may receive his own with usury.

A second Talent to be improved is Riches ; with them we are to trade for Heaven : a Servant of Christ trades in charity, and alms ; Charity to the Poor is freighting your Ship to Sea a long Voyage for great advantage : *Solomon* calls this, casting thy Bread upon the Waters, *Eccl.* 11. 1, 2. *Cast thy bread*

bread upon the face of the waters, and after many days thou shalt find it : and that to great advantage which he expounds ver. 2. to be giving a Portion to seven and eight. The Merchant casts his estate upon the face of the Waters; this is the trade that our Lord adviseth to, under the Parable of the unjust Steward, *Luk. 16.* So doth the Apostle St. Paul *1 Tim. 6. 17.* it is a trade that brings certain and large profit.

Thirdly, Suffering for Christ and his truth, is a Talent that some are called to trade in : and Christs chiefest Servants have a Talent given them in this kind; *Phil. 1. 29.* *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but to suffer for his sake :* (it is given to you,) and he that gives expects improvement of this gift, and not to hide it for fear. These three are the stable Commodities that Christs Servants venture in ; and they all turn to a rich account, which brings me to the second Doctrine which was this.

2^d Doct. That this Trade for Christ well managed, turneth to great profit and advantage to Master and Servant.

This Doctrine I only make use of as a Motive to the former : in handling this Doctrine I shall First, Prove the Doctrine. Secondly, Instance in particulars. Thirdly, Answer a Question as to the time of this return. Fourthly, Apply the whole.

First, For proof, we have it set forth in this Parable, Five Talents make Ten, according to *Luk. 19.* One Pound makes Ten. What Solomon saith, *Prov. 3.* is true, *The Merchandise hereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver or Gold;* that is so say, in the increase of it. What St. Paul saith to Timothy, *Tim. 4. 8.* is true here, *Godliness is great gain.*

Second

Secondly, To instance in particulars. First, Improving the Talent of knowledge, in Ministring light in order to Conversion, *Dan. 12. 2.* Such shall shine as Stars for ever and ever, *Pro. 11. 30.* He that winneth Souls is wise, and the wise shall inherit Glory, *Prov. 3. 35.* Those that St. Paul converted are his Joy and Crown at Christs appearing, *1 Thess. 2. 19.*

Secondly, As to Charity, a Cup of cold Water, where no better is to be had, shall have a large reward; any thing forsaken for Christ shall bring in a hundred fold. I have spoken to this before.

Thirdly, As to sufferings for Christ, those that suffer with him shall reign, *Rev. 7.* therefore are they before the Throne, because they came out of great tribulations. These three ventures makes great returns if rightly managed, to a right end, with a good design.

Thirdly. But when is this return and increase? I answer, When the Voyage is made, when Christ the Master comes at the Resurrection of the Just; those that trade this way, must trust till then; and all Christs Servants have good Insurance on Gods side, the reward is very sure; some are apt to look for their returns too soon, and to have lost all; have a care of that, *He that believeth makes not haste.* I shall speak a few words briefly, by way of Application to both parties. Are all Christs faithful Servants Traders, and is it a distinguishing Character between the faithful and slothful, that the good Servant traded, he went and traded?

Use. Then these considerations should put Christians upon examination and inquiry into their estate: Ask thy soul seriously this Question, What trade dost thou drive, and to what port dost thou trade, to the Port of Heaven or Hell? the Apostle in other words speaks the same thing, *Gal. 6. 7.* Whatever a Man sow, that shall he also reap: he that sows to the flesh, and he that sows to the Spirit, reaps accordingly: whither dost thou trade, dost thou trade for Heaven?

Then First, Thou hast thy heart concerned in the trade, and not only thy hands and body, it takes up thy heart: *Whosoever therefore hath faith in Christ, his heart will be also:* those that trade

this way are men of judgment and understanding in what they do; it is the fruit of wisdom to consider our latter end, *Dem.* 32. 29. *Psal.* 90. and to provide for it.

Secondly, Dost thou trade this way, thou dost not think what thou ventur'est in this trade is lost, because it is out of sight; but he goeth on comfortably, and believingly, though the greatest part of his estate is beyond the grave. The Apostle *St. Paul* was a worthy Merchant for Heaven, do but see his frame of Spirit, *2 Cor.* 4. 5. he speaks like a man of great estate, though most of it ventured out; but in *Chap.* 5. v. 7. *We walk by faith, and not by sight*; so *Phil.* 3. last. These Merchants are high in their Spirits, though low in their Purse; they are Persons of great hope. *Rom.* 12. 12. *Rejoice in hope*; it is the true nature of a Trader Heaven-ward to look, wait and expect returns, *1 Cor.* 1. 7. *1 Thess.* 1. 10. *Tism.* 2. 1. and such as look shall not be ashamed, *Heb.* 9. 28.

3 Use. Of exhortation, Be perswaded each of you to understand your particular Talent that you are intrusted with. First, Know it. Secondly, Stir it up. Labour to know what it is God hath principally intrusted thee with, either in quality or quantity; some have one, some another, see *1 Cor.* 12. 4. diversities of gift; some have inward intruments, some outward intruments, and God expects the improvement of all.

Secondly, When thou knowest thy gift, stir it up; it was *St. Paul's* Counsel to *Timothy*, *To stir up the gifts that was in him* *2 Tim.* 1. 6. *1 Pet.* 4. *As every one hath received the gift, so let him Minister*; whether in spirituals, or in temporals; therefore labour to know that herein lyeth thy great wisdom as a Christian trader to vent and venture; do not keep thy goods in thy Ware-house, but send them abroad; cast thy Bread upon the Waters: and to encourage thee, know that whatever thou ventur'est in this trade to this Port, is certainly and fully insured; and this *St. Paul* knew what he had committed this way was safe, *2 Tim.* 1. 12. *Pro.* 11. 18. *He that soweth to righteousness, shall have a sure reward.* Secondly, In venturing and venturing what you are intrusted with, do it upon the most acceptable terms; act as a wise Steward in each intrument.

Lastly, Admire the great love and respect Christ bears to his Servants, in this one consideration; that what Talent soever Christ intrusts his Servants with, is for their own good and profit, not his; he puts a stock into your hands to manage, the stock and product shall be thy own, himself is not profited, but thou hast the product of all thy ventures. So

have done with the second Doctrine. We now proceed to the third Doctrine which was this.

3. *D^{ist}*. That all Christs gifts and intruments are for use, as well small as great, two and one as well as five; Christ expects improvement of the least Talent if but one; those that have but little are not excused from service. Those under the Law that could not serve God with a Lamb, must bring two Turtle Doves or two young Pigeons; and if not so much, then a tenth part of an Ephah of Flower, *Levit. 5. 7, 11.* out of his little, he must sacrifice a little, none must appear empty; but as God had intrusted each of them with abilities, so they were to offer according to what he had received; the poor Widow was accepted with her farthing, and it appears that it was not only accepted, but expected, *Luk. 21.* from hence a Cup of cold Water given to a Disciple is rewarded; but where much is given, there much is required; and that Servant that had so little knowledge as it is called, not knowing his Masters will, yet he is beaten with few stripes for not improving that little, *Luk. 12. 42.* he expects improvement of little gifts and intruments.

Use of this Doctrine. This may serve to take off those excuses that many are apt to make, that they are very weak and poor, their gifts are small, therefore they will do nothing; consider that if thou hast but one Talent, it is Christs Talent and gift as well as five.

Secondly, Be encouraged to improve, for by improvement thy little may be made more; for to him that hath (to improve) shall be given, and he shall have abundance, *Luk. 19. 26.*

Thirdly, For encouragement, Consider that thou with thy little, art as truly a servant of Christ, as if thou hadst a great deal; that servant was Christs own servant unto whom he gave one Talent, as much as he to whom he gave five; and he that improved two, is admitted into his Masters joy as well as the other.

Fourthly, Consider for thy encouragement the equity of thy Master, he requires but according to what he gives, if he gives more he requires more, if less he requires less.

Fifthly, Have a special care of hiding or concealing thy intruments, that is a great evil, and upon what pretence soever done is greatly punishable, which leads me to the last Doctrine from these words which was this.

That amongst Christs Servants there are some that

obscure, hide, or conceal those Talents which they have received from Christ; this Christ foresaw, that in his absence near his coming he should have some such Servants. We have a bad Servant of Christ in this Chapter described under three similitudes.

First, A foolish Virgin. Secondly, Under the similitude of an idle Servant. Thirdly, By a Goat; these are all unprofitable to Christ. The Virgins afford him no light, when he hath most need; the Goat affords him no raiment, as the Sheep; the slothful Servant brings him in no increase in his stock or money; these Servants are all doomed alike to punishment, the foolish Virgins shut out with, I know you not; the slothful Servant into utter darkness, the Goats into Hell fire. From whence we may gather, that there is an indispensable duty upon all Christs Servants, to be industrious and faithful in improving what they have received from Christ, more or less; Oh! have a special care of a fearful frame of Spirit, the fearful are concluded as well as the abominable; this frame of Spirit hath hindered many from improving their Talents, as I shall shew you afterward from Verse 25. *I was afraid, and hid thy Talent*; our Lord had a taste of this before he went from some we read of John 12. 42. the Text saith, *Many believed on him but durst not confess him, lest they should be cast out of the Synagogue; for they loved the praise of men, more than of God: and consequently feared the frowns of men.*

Object. But some may Object, Is hiding and concealing what we have received such a sin? Do we not read of some that hid Christs sayings? and doth not David hide Gods word in his heart? and doth not Solomon call to his Sons, Prov. 12. 23. to conceal knowledge in their heart? To which I answer, We read of a twofold hiding in scripture: First, A hiding from a choice respect we have to a thing, in order to a safe keeping. Secondly, A hiding from use and improvement. This latter hiding is sinful in spirituals; to hide what Talent Christ doth intrust us with, is next door to the sin of rejecting a Talent and refusing to receive it.

Now in handling this Doctrine, I shall briefly speak a few words to each of these four heads. First, I shall open what this one Talent is that he hides. Secondly, When

a Person may be said to hide his Talent. Thirdly, Shew some causes hereof. Fourthly, speak a word of use to the whole. By this one Talent cannot be understood some one distinct gift or indowment, but rather a weak or smaller measure, of what others are more largely intrusted with.

Secondly, By hiding, is not to expose it to publick view, it is opposed to trading with it; to hide is this, when a Person hath received from God gifts, but none can see it, nor perceive thou hast it; to hide is opposed to standing forth with light, see *Deut.* 22. 1. so *Isa.* 58. 7. Not to hide himself from his own flesh, is to put forward to help. So to hide thy Talent, is when thou dost not put it forth to service.

Secondly, There is a comparative hiding, when a Person can put forth his light in smaller and less dangerous opportunities, and keep it in, in more large opportunities *Timothy profess a good profession before many witnesses.* But some may object and say, Am not I forbid to cast Pearl before Swine? I answer, We ought to be so wise as to know our times and seasons, and to see when a door is opened to Gods Glory, and the good of others.

Thirdly, There is a hiding our Talents by a corrupt conversation; let a Man say what he will if he do not live to it, it gives no light; we read of some *Rom.* 1. *Who withhold the truth in unrighteousness,* or imprison or conceal; to the end the *Philippians* might shine, they must be harmless or blameless; *Phil.* 2. 16. walking honestly among the Gentiles, is a great duty, to the end our Talent might be improved. As to the third head I shall be very brief, because I have spoken something to it before. I shall only in this place offer two considerations two occasional grounds of this hiding the Talent and not trading and improving, and we have them both in the Text. First, Fear. Secondly, An hard opinion of God; these two may be reduced into one, they depend one upon another, a hard opinion of God makes him afraid, a hard opinion of God doth sweetly comply and comport with a slothful Person; it feeds this humour of sloth; but I shall meet with this more properly in his place when we come at it, only a few words by way of use from the whole. And First,

Be exhorted from hence, not to hide or conceal what God hath intrusted thee with; stand forth as occasion is offered, and thy help called for, whether in knowledge, estate, sufferings for Christ. It is reported of *St. Peter* and *St. John*, *Act.* 5. 41. *That they rejoiced that they*

were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name. They accounted this a worthy intrustment. It is a dangerous evil to hide our Talent, and of a bad consequence, from these six considerations.

First, By hiding thy Talent God loseth his Glory, which was one end of his intrusting thee. it is all one as if he had intrusted thee with none, if it be concealed; therefore our Lord exhorts his Disciples, *Math. 5. 16.* that they should *Let their lights so shine, that men seeing their good works, might glorify their Father which is in Heaven.*

Secondly, If thou hidest thy Talent, the Church loseth her profit thereby; every gift is given for the good of the Body, the comfort and edification of the Body; therefore if thy Talent be hidden, the body hath loss, if thou hast light it must be set upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the House, it must not be put under a Bushel.

Thirdly, If thou hidest thy Talent, the World are great losers, thou dost not discharge that duty that is incumbent on thee, as to them. Ye are to be in Christ's absence, the light of the World, holding forth the word of truth.

Fourthly, Trading and improving thy Talents in a day when opportunity presents, will be a great comfort to thee in an evil day, when thou hast not that opportunity; doubtless *Solomon's* argument to inforce charity hath strength in it. *Eccles. 11. 2.* For thou knowest not what evil may be in the earth. *Iob* draws much comfort from this in the evil day, see *Chap. 6. 10.* I have not concealed the words of the Holy One; and so doth *David* draw comfort from the same root, *Psal. 40.* when innumerable evils compassed him about. Verse the 12. That he had not hid God's righteousness in his heart, but had declared and preached it in the great congregation.

Fifthly, Hiding our Talent, when called to put it forth, tends to our own eternal ruin; you may remember sufferings for Christ, I told you, is one of those intrustments we are to trade with; if this be hid, see what follows, *Mark 8. 38.* If any are ashamed of Christ (which is the same thing,) he will be ashamed, or hide himself from them, when he comes in his Glory attended with his Angels; he that hides his Talent is cast into utter darkness.

Sixthly, Consider that in all the Talents thou art intrusted with, thou art but a Steward for thy Master; and thou art not only to receive and lay up, but receive and lay out; if thou hast more than another, it is put into thy hands for others as well as thy self. So I have done with the fourth head.

We now proceed to the Fifth head contained Verse Nineteenth propounded to be handled in our speaking to this Parable, which was the return of the Master from his long Journey from Earth to Heaven. Now he returns from Heaven to Earth again, this is the return spoken of in this Parable, this return of Christ was foretold by Christ before his going away.

We have in this nineteenth Verse four circumstantial considerations.

First, The certainty of Christs return. It hath been already sufficiently proved, that Jesus Christ is the Subject of our Text.

Secondly, We have clearly supposed in this Text, and taken for granted, the capacity that Christ in that his return shall come in; he cometh cloathed and invested with power and dominion, he hath received the kingdom that he went to receive, according to Luk. 19. 15. and to return having received it. It is plain that when Christ comes to reckon with his Servants, he is intrusted with the kingdom; if you should ask me what kingdom? I answer, that kingdom prophesied of Dan. 7. 13. 14. and 27. under the whole Heaven, which our last Prophet John also, Rev. 11. 15. foresaw, the kingdoms of *this World*, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; when all tongues, nations, and languages shall serve him. That Christ hath received this Kingdom when he comes is plain, from Math. 22. the King comes in to see the guests, the Lord of those Servants cometh.

The Third circumstance considerable in this Verse, is considerable as to the period that Christ supposeth, exprest here after a long time; a long time between his going away and coming: it is the opinion of most that it will be near 2000 years, therefore he is said to go a far and long Journey.

The Fourth circumstance considerable, is the work he propounds chiefly to do when he comes, and that is to reckon

reckon with them: *After a long time the Lord of those Servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

Before I lay down those conclusions that do naturally arise from these words, I shall explicate and explain some words and passages in them. As First, What kind of coming is this spoken of here. Secondly, What is this long time. Thirdly, Who are intended by those Servants. Fourthly, What here is to be understood by reckoning.

First, This coming of Christ must be understood of his real personal coming, therefore it is said *1 Thess. 4.* the Lord himself shall descend. As the kingdom that Christ receives is a real kingdom properly understood, so is Christ a real proper and personal King: this kingdom was given him before his Ascension, as we have it *Math. 28.* and *last.* All power in Heaven and Earth is given to me: But we must make a difference between a kingdom given, and a kingdom received; a Person may have a Legacy given him by Will, several years before he do actually possess it, and so it is here: It is a certain truth, that when Christ hath received this kingdom, he is submitted unto by all Nations and People, they shall serve and obey him.

Christ in this his return, must needs be in as real a state as when he went away, *Mat. 1. 11.* *As ye see me go, so I come again,* in a Visible appearance; *Rev. 1. 7.* every Eye shall see him, not a spiritual invisible appearance or coming as some would have it in the spirit; but a real coming such as shall amaze his enemies; those that are his enemies shall call for the Rocks to hide *them* from the sight of him, *Rev. 6.*

But what is this long time? I answer, First, It may properly be called a long time in its self, from his Ascension to his second Coming, as I said before near 2000 years. Secondly, A long time as considered to Man, considered many generations passe in this time. Thirdly, A long time as with respect to his faithful Servants longing desires; they think it long, they think the Bridegroom tarrys: but how shall we reconcile this long time with a little while, commonly set out by *Heb. 10. 38.* *Yet a little while and he shall come,* so *John 16. 17.* *A little while and I will see you again.*

I answer. Sometimes a little and a long time is understood

stood as to God-ward: a little time with God, is a long time with Man; this St. Peter seems to argue, 2. Pet. 9. *The Lord is not slack as some men count slackness.* Men count it a long time; but a 1000 years with God, is but as one day; so here according as men count, it is a long time, but all things with God are present. Secondly, It is a long time comparatively understood, long in comparison of the time; after such and such things shall appear, then it is but a little time. After this manner Christ speaks, *Job. 16.* When the Churches sorrows are at the highest and sharpest, then it is but a little before Christ comes, see *Mat. 2. 4.* compared with *Heb. 10. 37.* when such things appear: then yet a little time, and he that shall come will come: so must it be understood, *Luk. 21. 31.* *Then it is near, even at the door.* The third thing to be inquired after, who are those Servants intended; called here those Servants? I answer, By those are to be understood the Servants indefinitely considered, for this is a relation to Verse fourteenth, called there his own servants indefinitely considered, such as he had intrusted with his substance, those Servants. Fourthly, What is this reckoning with them? this word *λογίζομαι* is drawn from a word that signifies to speak or reason: and some render it speaking with them, some to reason with them: And indeed Christs reckoning with them, is only a fair reasoning with them, as we see by the following Verses: for our Lord admits of a reply, the Servant speaks in his own defence as long as he hath a word to speak, and then out of his own mouth Christ condemns him, for every mouth must be stopped, and all the World shall become guilty before God, as we may see in the Parable of the Labourers, *Mat. 20. 11.* see there how Christ reasons with them, *Friend I do thee no wrong, didst not thou agree with me for a penny?* so here, did I not find thee slack, thou wert only required to put it forth; thou didst herein but venture mine, not thy own: thus Christ reckoneth with them or reasoneth rather. Before I proceed I shall sum up the matter of this Text into 3 Doctrines. 1st *Doff.* That although it may seem long first, yet Jesus Christ shall come again; though his journey be far and long, yet his return is sure and certain: *after a long time the Lord of those Servants cometh.* 2^d *Doff.*

2 *Doff.* That Jesus Christ in his next and second coming, cometh clothed with dominion; he cometh as the Lord of those Servants.

3 *Doff.* One of the great and first businesses propounded by Christ to be entred upon at and in his next coming, is to reckon, reason, and deal with his own Servants. Though he will judge the World, yet he doth begin at his own House first: As the Servants of Christ are raised first, 1 Cor. 15. Rev. 20 so they shall be judged first, this is a certain truth. But for brevity sake I shall in the handling of the first Doctrine, endeavour to draw in these two latter Doctrines if I can.

This great truth of Christs second coming hath been richly placed upon the hearts of Gods people from the beginning of the World. This return of Christ was seen of *Enoch* who lived in the beginning of the World, he prophesied of his second coming. See the Testimony of the Apostle *Jude*, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints. This the Prophet *Zachary* prophesieth of, Zac. 14. 5. The Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee. This St. *Paul* to the *Thessalians* speaketh of, see 1 Thess. 3. c. 4. c. 5. And it is observable that more than twenty times our Lord hints and foretells his second coming again before he went away.

As we may find in *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*, it was frequent with Christ before he went to foretell his coming. And that from these reasons.

First, Because this was a rich truth, therefore it dwelt richly upon Christs heart, he did not go away as not to come again; he knew well, for his exaltation, that where he suffered he should come again and be glorified, our Lord was willing to leave this truth upon record, as from himself as well as from his Prophets before.

Secondly, This truth our Lord is very careful to assert and strengthen, as well knowing that this would be a truth much questioned and doubted by his Disciples, and opposed and mocked at by enemies. The Disciples and Servants of Christ intend little less, *Luk. 12. 45.* when they say their Lord delays his coming, and thereupon fall to beating their fellow Servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken, and what doth it import less, when it is so often said that Christ

Christ shall come in a day when they are not aware, nor look not for him? and the World in general are destitute of faith in this second coming of Christ; this St. Peter foresaw, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. they mock and scoff at such a principle, therefore our Lord doth often hint and assert his second coming, that he might strengthen that part that was weak.

Thirdly. This our Lord is frequent in to assert his second coming before his going away, to strengthen and encourage their hearts as to a truth that would much contribute to their joy, for what could more contribute to their comfort and joy, than the thoughts and belief of Christs coming? This is their encouragement in all their tribulations, and to that end it is applied by Christ, *John* 16. *I will come and see you again.* To the same end doth the Apostle James apply it, *1am.* 5. *Be patient Brethren, the coming of the Lord draws nigh.* Christ well knew that it would be the joy and life of his Disciples to hear of his coming again, who were so sorrowful at his going away. And there are four chioce priviledges in Christs second coming, that make it very desirable to his Disciples.

First, At this his coming, there is an end put to all temptations Satan can tempt no more nor can they sin any more, the righteousness of Saints, that is now liable to blemishes, and corruptions, but shall then be pure and permanent, *then he that is righteous shall be righteous still.*

Secondly. At the Masters coming, the Servants are discharged from all their work, and from all their intrustments, their commission then expires, it is but occupy till I come, then they are to enter into their Masters joy, no longer Servants but rulers over Cities, *what thou hast (saith Christ) hold fast till I come, .Rev.* 2. 27. then will I discharge thee, nay saith our Lord if thou serveest me faithfully till then, I will gird my self and serve thee.

Thirdly. At Christs coming thou shalt not only be taken off from all thy work, but largely rewarded for thy work done, now as the hireling longeth for the evening, because he might receive his wages, *Job* 7. 2. so a Servant of Christ hath reason and allowance to look for his reward, and long for it also.

Fourthly, He shall not only then receive his wages
and

and reward for his work, but great praise also for his work: see 1 Cor. 4. 3. *Then shall every man have praise of God: so Rom. 2. last. Whose praise is not of men, but of God, 1 Pet. 17. sound unto praise then; and it is no small priviledge to have praise of God: for Christ to praise a poor soul at that day is a great priviledge, this was the case with the faithful Servant, Well done good and faithful servant. For a King in such state and glory, to praise and commend a poor creature, how ravishing a priviledge is it?* *Quest.* A faithful Servant of Christ for these reasons desires his second coming, but why is it said after a long time the Lord of these Servants cometh? *1 Ans.*

1. Because our Lord foresaw that some would be apt to look for him too soon: there are two extreames that persons are apt to be attended with, in the latter days, as to Christs second coming, as we may perceive by the Apostles application to each of them in Scriptures: there are some that are apt to look for him too soon, to such the Apostle St. Paul addresseth himself, 2 Thes. 2. with much ardency and affection to divert their expectations, seeing it to be a dangerous opinion.

Secondly, We may perceive there are some also who are apt to put this day far away from them: to these St. Peter applieth himself, 2 Pet. 3. because all things continue as they were from the beginning, therefore they conclude it would not come at all; to such he asserts his coming: but the day of the Lord will come notwithstanding his seeming long tarrying.

Now as to the 2 Doctr. I shall take it in prosecution of this Doctrine, and from thence speak unto the nature of Christs second coming, which (according to the second Doctrine) is as cloathed with dominion. The Lord of those servants he comes cloathed with such power that when he is but demanding a question of him that had not on the wedding garment, he is struck speechless, see Math. 22. 11. *When the King came in to see the guests.* And the very sight of Christ in his coming, causeth the greatest men on earth to call to the Rocks and Mountains to fall on them, and hide them from his face, Rev. 6.

The use that we may make of these three Doctrines put together is, first by way of examination.

First, How doth thy heart breath after thy Masters coming.

coming, dost thou fear it, or dost thou desire it, how is it with thee, if thou art a wicked Servant, thou maist justly fear thy Masters coming from a five fold Consideration.

First, He comes to thee as a person who hast abused his tender mercy, and favours, which will greatly aggravate thy sorrows, and fears, and justly provoke God against thee.

Secondly, That great power that Christ in this his coming is clothed with, is all against thee, to crush thee, and destroy thee,

Thirdly, Christ to such is clothed with as much wrath as power, and all his power is subservient to his wiath, which shall make all sinners (though in Zion) afraid with great fear, see *Esa. 33. 14. The sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness shall surprize the Hypocrite.* Then in that day he that hath been for a long time a Lamb, meek, gentle, and patient, shall then be a Lyon, which shall tear and rend, and none shall deliver out of his hands.

Fourthly, This day is sad, because they shall lose all that they have wrought, though thou hast prophesied or Preacht, cast out Devils, done many mighty works, all is in vain.

Fifthly, Then no more opportunity or intrustment, no Tryal more! then the Summer is past, the Harvest is ended, and such are not saved, it is a sad word, *Jer. 8. 30.*

Secondly, By way of Tryal, art thou a faithful Servant? then,

First, Thou believest Christs coming, thou believest the Principle that he shall come, this was the Faith of all Christs faithful Servants, they could say, *he that shall come, will come.*

Secondly, If thou beest a faithful Servant, thou art preparing for his coming, so as to endeavour to have all the work done against he come.

Thirdly, Thou prayest for his coming, it is one petition in thy prayer with *St. John, Rev. 22. Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Fourthly, If thou beest one of Christs Disciples, thou rejoicest in the faith and thoughts of Christs coming, As it was proper for Christs Servants to sorrow at Christs

Christ going away from earth to Heaven, *Iohn 1. ch. 16.* so they rejoyce in his coming from Heaven to Earth: what the Prophet *Isaiah, Ch. 25. 9* Prophecie is true in this, they shall say, *Loe this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us, this is the Lord, we have waited for him, and he will save us. We will rejoyce and be glad in his Salvation.* Examine thy self by these rules whether thou art a faithful servant or no, if thou bee a faithful servant, thou hast no cause to be troubled or afraid at Christs coming? he comes to them (as you have heard before) as a Bridegroom, which bespeaketh to be a day of great joy and Glory.

The Third thing to be inquired into, (and which takes in the third Doctrine) is what Christ at this his coming shall enter upon first, the answer lyeth in the text, to Judge his own house, called here reasoning or reckoning with them.

Christs own Servants must be judged first, the first piece of justice dispenced by Christ; is to his own Servants, they must be judged, see *1 Cor. 4. 5.* compared with *2 Cor. 5. 10.* for we must all appear before the Judgment seat of Christ (saith *St. Paul*) he comprehendeth himself, and that he may first judge them, he first raiseth them out of their graves, as we have it, *1 Cor. 15. 23.* they that are Christs (that is to say his own) shall be raised at his coming, which is plain *1 Thes. 4. Those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,* which agreeth with *Rev. 20.* And there is much and good reason why Christ shall judge his house first, and see that in order, and acquit the guiltless and faithful.

First, Because the Saints must joyne with him in judging World according to the *1 Corinths. 6. 2.* *Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World.* Therefore they cannot be tryed at the same Bar, but must be cleared before, and then they enter into their Masters joy, Glory, and Dominion.

Viz. By way of Use, First, from hence we may learn this plain and wholesome truth, that even Christs Disciples must be tryed and judged. Some have been ready to think that Saints should not be judged any other wise than what they meet with in themselves, *1 Cor. 11.* because *St. Paul* saith if they would judge themselves, they should not be judged of men.

For answer to which, I say, that *Paul* there speaks of Temporal not Eternal Judgement, present Chastisement, as we may perceive by the Context.

I shall only leave two words with Christ's servants; and close this, *viz.* First, a word of *Information*. Secondly, a word of *Exhortation*.

First then, from what hath been said, be informed that this long time of Christ's tarrying is almost at an end, his time draws very near. Therefore in the Second place, seeing his coming is to take account of his own Servants; indeavour to calculate all thy actions and doings for this day. Take *Paul's* Counsel to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 5. 9. labour so to discharge your duties as you may be accepted of him. So we have done with *verse 19*.

We now proceed to the matter and manner of Christ's reasoning or reckoning. We had before from *ver. 19*. That Christ comes to reckon with his servants; we have here the matter of fact, the reckoning it self. And this reckoning I shall divide into two parts. First, a reckoning with the industrious; Secondly, with the slothful Servants.

I shall begin with the Industrious and Faithful in Christ's house first, because that lyeth first here in order; and because the reckoning is so interwoven and mixed with the reward, I shall at once glance at these four verses, 20, 21, 22, 23.

20. And so he that had received five Talents, came and brought other five Talents, saying; Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five Talents; behold, I have gained besides them five Talents more.

21. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

M

22. H,

22. He also that had received two Talents, came and said, Lord thou deliveredst unto me two Talents: behold I have gained other two Talents besides them.

23. His Lord said unto him, Well done good and Faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

In handling this latter part of the Parable I shall be very brief, because I have anticipated much of the matter before in what I have spoken as to this parable.

We have contained in this reckoning these two Subjects, Reckoning and Recompence.

1. It must be supposed that this Reckoning or Account is called for by Christ, not that they came voluntarily and offered themselves to tryal, because it is here said, *he came*: For according to *Luke 19. 15.* the parallel place saith, *he commanded them to be called*, or brought, who had been intrusted with his Coin or Substance. However the Servants are willing to come to account, and the best first. Our Lord in this his Reckoning begins with two Questions, as must be implied: First, *what hast thou received?* Secondly *what hast thou gained?* To both which Christ's servants are ready to return an answer.

In our glance upon this Reckoning, we have something remarkable first, as to Christ's servants; Secondly, something remarkable as from the Lord. We have two things considerable as to the servants.

First, We have the willingness and freeness to make an acknowledgment of what they are charged with. We find Christ chargeth one with five, one with two, and another with one; and herein there is no difference, their Accounts, though of so long standing, agree; no difference in their Account, here is right reckoning on both hands.

Secondly, as considerable in Christ's Servants, they are ready to produce their Effects more or less, as to acknowledg the Stock, and to expose it to their Master and to his use, it is ready for him; *behold, I have gained besides them five Talents more*; I have doubled. I pray take notice (*behold*) he hath a desire to have his Account past, he is forward therein.

Secondly; we have something worthy observation in their Lord. First, we have their Lord's good resentment, and choice acceptance of their Account and Returns, their good service wins much upon their Lord's heart. But secondly, it appears in his assigned Reward hereupon; which consists in two parts. First, Rule. Secondly, Joy. The nature of which Joy we have explained and called their *Master's Joy*. The next thing I shall do in prosecution of this Subject, is, to explain some words and phrases in these words; as first, *When may a servant be said to double his Talent*. Secondly, *When may a servant of Christ be by Christ called good*. Thirdly, *What are those few things spoken of in which he had been faithful*? Fourthly, *What is this Rule that shall be an eminent part of the servants reward*? Fifthly, *What kind of Joy may this be understood to be, called the Master's Joy*. A word to each of these.

First, *When doth he double, or make such a satisfactory increase*?

Ans. Thy Gain doth lye in three heads. First, Gain in Grace. Secondly, Gain souls to Christ. Thirdly, Gain in glory to God and Christ.

First. Thou art an acceptable Servant, or Gainer, when thou hast gained increase in the Gifts and Graces that God hath bestowed on thee. It is a Christian's duty to multiply and add to what he hath received of this kind. To grow in grace is a positive

duty, 2 Pet. 3. 18. And that this is wonderfully acceptable to God where there is an addition, we may perceive, if we seriously read 2 Pet. 1. to the tenth verse, this is called Fruit, Phil. 4. 17. *Not that I desire a Gift (saith Paul) but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

Secondly, Then are you gainers with acceptance, when your Talent by improving hath gained souls to Christ, more Servants into the Master's family. This is Christ's glory, Heb. 2. *Here am I, and my Children:* how many Servants hast thou Gained and begotten to Christ? This shall be thy Glory and Crown in the day of Christ; this is Paul's glory, 1 Thes. 2. last.

Thirdly; That which is thy acceptable Gain, is when thou hast walked so, as to gain glory to God and Christ by thy walkings: *Matth. 5. 16. That they may glorify thy Father which is in heaven.* It was that which Jesus Christ pleaded to his Father, *Joh. 17. I have glorified thee on earth; and these will God glorify in heaven.* This is to walk worthy of God, 1 Thes. 2. 12, and worthy of Glory.

2. *How may a Servant of Christ deserve the name good? None is good but God.*

I Answer. None is good in the abstract but God; good so as to have no mixtures of evil: but some are called good, as *Barnabas*, Acts 11. 24. is said to be a good man: but good in the sense of the text must be taken for one profitable and beneficial; so we understand a good Servant to us is a profitable Servant, one that is faithful in our business to our profit; the good Servant here is as much as if he had said, profitable Servant.

3. *What are these few things?*

By *few things* we must refer to the Talents as before; the few things are the five Talents; the Master under-
values

values his intrustments to magnifie the profit of the Servant. Christ speaks with the least, byway of diminution from what he had intrusted him with; I trusted thee with but a few things; Christ takes notice of all disadvantages in quality and quantity, that he might advance the Faithfulness of his Servants to him; *Then hast been faithful in a few things.*

4. What Rule shall this be as part of the Servants reward?

1 Answer. The same that Christ's shall be; as the Joy, so the Rule. It is material Command, and Government, *Rev. 2. 27.* Rule over the nations with Christ, as here over ten Cities.

2. When-as here it is called the *Masters Joy*, it implys a very large and unspeakable Joy: Joy in this sence is not only Goodness but Glory. Christ is said to be *anointed with the oile of Gladness above his fellows*, *Psalm 45.* but his fellows shall have some of the same anointings; though not so much in quantity, yet the same in quality and kind, it is the Joy of the Lord. There are ten Parts observable in these words.

1. That the best and highest intrusted Servants of Christ must be accountable for their stock received: such as have received five Talents.

2. A True and Faithful Servant of Christ is very free and apt to acknowledg all his Enjoyments and Intrustments to be of God; *Then deliveredst unto me five Talents.*

3. Where Christ hath given Stock, he doth indispensibly require Improvements.

4. Winning and gaining, is the required and acceptable life of a Christian.

5. That Jesus Christ is exceedingly pleased, even to

duty, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. And that this is wonderfully acceptable to God where there is an addition, we may perceive, if we seriously read 2 *Pet.* 1. to the tenth verse, this is called Fruit, *Phil.* 4. 17. *Not that I desire a Gift (saith Paul) but I desire fruits that may abound to your account.*

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4. Winning and gaining, is the required and acceptable life of a Christian.

5. That Jesus Christ is exceedingly pleased, even to

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satisfaction with delight, with an industrious Servant, one that doubles his Stock.

6. Faithfulness and industry, sloathfulness and wickedness are taken on for another by Christ.

7. Christ's way of trying his Servants is by trusting them with a little first, called here *few things*.

8. The well improvement of a little in Spirituality, doth infallibly introduce and bring in increase.

9. Future Rule is one great part of Christ's future Reward to his Faithful Servants for their industry.

10. That the state and Condition of Christ's Servants at his Coming, is a state of great Joy. Of these a few words.

I shall pass these Observations very briefly, because I have spoken something in the opening of the words to some of them.

First; *That the best and highest of Christ's Servants must be accountable to Christ at his Coming.* This is often hinted in the Scriptures; those two Scriptures, *Rev. 14. 2 Cor. 5. 10.* Paul takes in himself, *We must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ: to receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad:* the good must be brought there as well as the bad. This Truth (in at least) implicitly held forth, in the message of Christ to *Pergamos*. Those that are praise-worthy must receive a white-stone, a token of their Acquitting and Justification, which is spoken in a borrowed speech, from the manner of the proceedings of the Courts of Judicature in those days; when persons were acquitted they had a white-stone given into their hands. Which doth teach us that the innocent as well as the guilty, the faithful as well as the wicked Servant, must be reckoned with; this is the day of blotting out the sins of true converted persons. See *Acts 3. 19.* this is the proper time when those praise-worthy

thy shall receive praise of God, 1 Cor. 4. 5. The Consideration of this truth serves to teach humility and holiness; thy actions must be examined by Jesus Christ before thou art commended; whatsoever men say of thee or account of thee, that is the day of manifestation of thy Faithfulness. This well considered, will much promote Holiness and Carefulness. 2 Cor. 5. 9. *Wherefore we labour that we may be accepted of him.* So much for the First Part.

2. Part. *The true and Faithful Servants of God are free and ready to acknowledg all their enjoyments and intruments are of God.* This I might largely prove from the Current of Scriptures; but I forbear to be large; only see what Paul saith, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *but our sufficiency is of God.* And as they are ready to acknowledg whilst they are here, so they are as ready to acknowledg it to Christ at his appearance, as in our Text. And all this ariseth from that principle of humility dwelling in them, which makes them little in their own eyes both now and then. Read the frame of Spirit that dwelt upon Holy and Humble Paul, 2 Cor. 4. I shall only leave this one word of instruction from hence; Study how acceptable this frame of Spirit is to Christ when he findeth it, either now or then.

Part. 3. *When Stock is given, there is improvement indispensibly required; the Contrary will not be born by God or Christ.* This I have spoken unto before.

Part. 4. *That the right state of Christ is a Winning Gaining state.* If thy State be right, as it ought to be, thou art gaining, increasing, and adding in the inward man. This is a true and a proper Character of a righteous and holy person, Job 17. 9. *he grows stronger and stronger.* The Father, who is the husband-

bandman, purgeth his vine, *John. 15.* that it may bring forth more Fruit. This I have toucht upon before.

Part. 5. Jesus Christ is pleased even to delight in an industrious improving Soul. Jesus Christ is herein like a frugal man in the world, he loves to see his tenants and Servants thrive under him. The Spirit of Paul was the same that dwelt in Christ, when he was glad and rejoiced in the *Thessalonians* increase in Spirituals, *2 Thess. 1. 3.* *That their faith groweth, and their charity aboundeth.* This is that which the Spirit of God takes notice of in the Church of *Thyatira*, *Rev. 2, Thy last works are more than thy first.* And from whence doth this arise in God and Christ? not because our profiting is to his own profit, no, we can add nothing to his glory: but the love of God to his creature is such, that he would have us bring forth fruit that might abound to our own account: admire the goodness and dear love of Christ to his Servants.

Part. 6. Faithfulness and industry are in Christ's account the same thing, and sloathfulness and wickedness are the same. He that improves his Talents, doth bear the appellation of *Good and Faithful Servant.*

We are now upon the industrious Servant, he had traded to advantage, and he is Faithful. Faithfulness is a proper qualification in a Servant; *that he be found faithful* is required in a Steward, *1 Cor. 4. 2.* that is, that he makes a distribution to each according to their several needs. *Luke 12. 42.* He is a Faithful Steward that gives them meat in due season,

Use. A sloathful Servant of Christ can never be reckoned faithful. Sloathfulness is no such small sin as some take it to be; there is a curse pronounced by God against a sloathful person, *Jer. 48, that doth the work or business of the Lord negligently.* A faithful Servant hath

hath these three properties: First. He is diligent in his business in which he is intrusted. Secondly, he aims and designs his Masters profit in all he does. Thirdly he stands up for his Masters Name and Credit in what he does. A good and faithful Servant answers to all these.

Part. 7. *Christ's usual way is to try his Servants with a little first.* All that he intrusts his Servants in this world, though never so large intrustments, are but small and few things in comparison of what they shall be trusted with hereafter: there are true riches to commit to his faithful Servants, *Luke 16. 10, 11, 12.* The intrustments here are called the least things, and he that is unfaithful in these least, shall not be intrusted with much. O then Consider, that thy future intrustment depends upon thy present improvement of what thou hast committed to thee, whether it be Wisdom, Riches, or any other Gift; thou hast those Gifts only for a tryal, and thou art now only in the Tryal; thou must be tryed before thou be trusted more.

Part. 8. Is the Use of this; *Be assured that the well-improvement of a little shall certainly bring in abundance: To him that hath, shall be given & he shall have abundance,* as we have it, *Mat. 25. 29.* we have a double shall to confirm the truth of this.

Part. 9. *Jesus Christ rewards his faithful Servants with Rule and Government.* Be thou over ten Cities. And that this is properly and really to be taken is plentifully proved from other Scriptures: *Dan. 7. 27.* *The Kingdom under the whole Heavens shall be given to the people of the Saints of the most high.* And in several other Scriptures; But I shall meet with this more fully afterwards.

This reward is a very great reward in Christ's esteem

stem, sufficient to requite his Servants for all their faithfulness and industry.

Part. 10. *The state will be a state of very great Joy, called here the Master's Joy; a state of unspeakable joy. Sometimes this state of Joy comprehends all good, as sorrow comprehends all evil. See an eminent place to this purpose, Isa. 35. 10. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting Joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighings shall flee away.* This I have according to my promise, only touched these ten Parts, and so I have done with the 20, 21, 22, 23. verses.

We now proceed to the 24th verse; and it is altogether necessary that we do at once cast our eye upon these seven verses, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, at once because they all together make up the whole proceeding of Christ with the sloathful Servant.

24. *Then he which had received the one Talent came and said, Lord, I know thee: that thou art a hard man reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not sowed.*

25. *And I was afraid, and went and hid thy Talent in the Earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine.*

26. *His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and sloathful Servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sow not, and gathered where I strawed not.*

27. *Thou oughtest therefore to have put thy money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.*

28. *Take therefore the Talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten Talents.*

29. *For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.*

he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30. And cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

That which remains to be handled as to the winding up of this second Parable, is that remarkable passage relating to the sloathful and unprofitable Servant, which was him who had received the one Talent; a relation of whom we have contained in the foregoing verses: the whole whereof divides it self into three Parts.

First, the Servant's Answer, Plea and Defence.

Secondly, the Lord's ill-resentment and dissatisfaction thereat.

Thirdly, his proceeding thereupon.

Now for order's Sake, I shall speak to these heads distinctly; and

First, the Servant's Answer, Plea and Defence. An Answer I call it, because it must be implied that his Lord in his reckoning with him propounds a double Question. First, *What hast thou received?* Secondly, *What improvement hast thou made?* This first Part contains verse. 24. 25. in which verses we have his Confession and Concision with his Lord that he had received one Talent.

Secondly, We have him, as formerly, acknowledging that he had made no improvement; and he seems to fix the foot and foundation of his non-improvement upon his Lord, namely his Lord's austeritiy and severity; the sence and knowledg whereof began fear in him, which fear disenabled him, bound up his hands, took away his heart, hindred his industry; and in short, all the whole fault of his miscarrying in this affair is wholly laid upon his Lord, even as our father Adam at first did, Gen. 3. And all this evil, is found-

ed upon a mistake of the nature and Justice of his Lord: as first he chargeth his Lord with hardness of austerity, according to the paralel place, *Luke 19.20. For I feared thee because thou wert an austere Man.* Secondly, he chargeth his Lord with unreasonable-ness and exactions; like *Pharaoh*, who required bricks, and gave no straw: So ver. 21. *Thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not Sow, or gatheredst where thou hast not sowed;* and this charge he doth not exhibit as by report, or hear-say, but upon sure and certain knowledg, *I knew thee that thou wert a hard man.*

We find him not only charging his Lord, but Justifying himself, and that by a threefold Circum-stance: First, I do not slight or cast away thy Talent, but I had an esteem for thy Talent, and I laid it up accordingly, I wrapt it up safe in a napkin. Secondly, I had a care of it, that it should not be lost or stoln, I digged a hole in the earth and laid it up safe, I did not cast it carelessly away. And Thirdly, This I did not for my own profit or advantage, but for thine, that I might keep it and render it whole to thee as the owner: See the words *see, or behold* there is thine own, (*see*) behold, or take notice; he makes proclamation: As if he should say, I care not who sees my pro-ceedings, they are so righteous; I give thee that which is thine own, what canst thou desire more? I have not lost or imbezelled it away, there it is.

Before I proceed to the Observations, I shall speak a few words by way of explication of some words and passages in the Text; as,

First, how comes this Servant to assume this confi-dence and freedom of Speech?

Secondly, How comes this Servant to understand this

his austerity and severity, or what doth he intend by
it?

Thirdly, I shall speak a few words as to the falsity
and untruth of this charge.

Fourthly, What is this fear that surprized this Ser-
vant?

Fifthly, What is to be understood by his hiding
his Talent in the earth?

Sixty, How came he by this knowledg that he can
say here, he knew? A few words to each of these,
and that briefly, and so I shall proceed to the Ob-
servations.

How comes it to pass that this Wicked and sloath-
ful Servant doth assume such boldness and Confidence
in the presence of his Lord, cloathed with such do-
minion and majesty? doth it not seem to cross many
other Scriptures, which speak of fear and shame to be
upon such, *Isa. 33. 14. The sinners in Zion shall be
afraid, fearfulness shall surprize the hypocrite. Mat.
22. who at one question demanded by Christ is struck
speechless. And doth not Paul, Rom. 3. tell us, with
respect to this day, that every mouth shall be stop?*
here seems to be the contrary; this Hypocrite is bold,
and his mouth open. Yet notwithstanding these Scrip-
tures, other Scriptures are plain, that bad persons and
hypocrites shall plead with Christ in that day; and
not only plead, but plead hard and stiffly, so that
Christ takes some pains to shake them off; as *Mat. 7.
Luke 13.* Therefore to reconcile these Scriptures, I
understand there are 2 sorts of Hypocrites: one sort
who are gross Hypocrites, that are so by a design; a
prophane person in Saints apparel, that knows he is so,
only he is designed to be thought otherwise. Second-
ly, There is another sort of Hypocrites who (as *Caryl
on Job. 34. 30.* calls them) are simple or sincere hypo-
crites

crites, who do not design to deceive, but are deceived themselves and think their state good. And such sort must be understood in this Chapter, and also *Luke 13. Mat. 7.* who did not distrust their own state, but thought their state to be good enough. Of such a sort of persons *Paul* speaks, *Gal. 6. 3. If any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing,* he supposeth such there are who in their own thoughts be right: There are self-deceivers, which *James* speaks of *Chap. 1. 22.* and they are such who trust to their being hearers of the Word only. Now such as these thinking well of themselves, no wonder if they be bold: there are some persons that in the day of Christ shall suffer great disappointment, contrary to their expectations: so that not all Hypocrites shall be afraid, though the generality shall. And those we read of in *Mat. 22. 42, 43, &c.* that were speechless at Christ's asking a question, doth not take off, but that some may answer as in our Text.

Secondly, *I Answer.* At last those Scriptures also will be fulfilled, there will be cause of Fear and Con-
 sternation also, when they are cast at the bar of Christ, and then all such shall be speechless, and every mouth stopped: and this will be the state of this Servant in our Text, when he seeth his pleas prove ineffectual.

But from what here hath been spoken, may some demand, *Is it possible for a person to be a hypocrite, and himself not know it? how shall I then know what my state is?*

I Answer. It is true, that you may be deceived in your selves, must be taken for granted, from the many Cautions and Counsels given against self-deceit, and Counsel to *examine our selves, our own selves,* *1 Cor. 13.* But, to know thy state to be good and free

from

from hypocrisie, inquire after these qualifications, which are infallible marks of Sincerity.

1. Dost thou make Conscience of the most secret Sins and Evils to avoid them, even vain thoughts?

2. Dost thou make Conscience of the most Secret Duties to do them, Secret Prayer, Secret Alms, and such-like? I only leave this brief touch here, because it is handled before.

But Secondly, What doth this Servant intend by his Lords being *austere* or hard, according to *Luke* 19. and no-where else used in the Scriptures throughout?

Answer. It signifyeth a severe, cruel, sower, as we call it, cruel, miserable man; in opposition to tenderness, mildness, gentleness, freeness, mercifulness, Justice and equity.

But is this charge true or false?

I Answer. It is utterly false, from a four-fold testimony. 1. The Testimony of God himself. 2ly. From the Testimony and Experience of the People of God in all ages. 3dly. From the works and ways of God and Christ in all ages the contrary appeareth. 4thly. This very Servant implicitly sets forth the contrary.

First. This Charge is false from the Lord's own Testimony, who cannot lye, nor needs not Care for any man. See the publication of his Name, which agrees with his Nature; Mercifulness, and Graciousness and Goodness is a great part of his Name and Nature, and Jesus Christ in whom the God-head dwelt bodily was not the Contrary, harsh and cruel. The tenderness of God exceeds the tenderness of a Mother to her sucking child, *Isa.* 49. *Matth.* 18. from 11 to 33. what a quite contrary nature is in Christ? *I forgave thee all thy debt as soon as desired.*

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Secondly. See what God's Servants in all ages bear in Testimony to the contrary Nature of God in Christ. Nehemiah 9. 17. *God is a God ready to pardon, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness.* See the same Psal. 103. from ver. 3. to 14. See what *Jehonab* saith contrary to this Servant, Jonah 4. 2. *I speak quite in another language, I knew thee that thou art a gracious God, slow to anger, of great kindness, good to all; his tender mercy is over all his works.* And as to Christ it is said of him, *Grace is poured into his lips*, Psal. 45. and John 1. 14. *full of grace and truth.* See *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 14. Eph. 2. 4.

Thirdly; The falseness of this Position appears in the Works of God and Christ in general, and particularly in an eminent passage of Gods tenderness to his former people, if we read Judges 3. 4, 6, 10. for or seven times it is recorded upon their crying *His soul was grieved for their misery*: See the nature of God, Ezek. 16. 3, to 14. see Gods condescension to *Abraham's* pleading for *Sodom*, Gen. 18. if God had been cruel and harsh, he had not given Christ. Secondly, if Christ had been cruel and harsh, he had not freely offered himself, and admirable is this sweet nature in Christ! Oh the frequent manifest sympathy with poor Creatures in distress, he had compassion on them, healed them, shewed mercy to them. We read of Christ but twice weeping in his time on earth, and both times arising from the sweetness and goodness of his nature; once he wept over *Lazarus*, John 11. once over *Jerusalem*, Luke 19. Let Christ's works speak for him, that the suggestion of the Sloathful Servant is utterly untrue, when he saith, *I knew thee that thou wert an austere man*; a hard and a cruel man.

Fourthly, This imputation put upon Christ, is false from the servants own mouth: as First, he cannot

but confess that his Lord had trusted him with a part of his estate; he therefore falsely chargeth his Lord with reaping where he had not sown: for he confesseth, that he had received one Talent, which was seed sown. Thus I have briefly endeavoured to discharge our good Lord from this false imputation.

The Fourth thing I am to speak to is the nature of this fear that surprised this sloathful servant, *What kind of fear is this? [I was afraid]*

I Answer. There are two sorts of Fear with respect to God.

First, a reverential Godly Gospel-Fear, that keeps us in awe that we sin not; this Fear is a good and a profitable Fear.

Secondly, there is a legal slavish Fear, the tendency whereof is to drive men to despair of God and his goodness. This Fear was of this Second sort which begot in him a disrespect to his Lord, as appears; and this Fear led him to great negligence in duty.

Fifthly. What may we understand, or rather what would he have his Lord understand by his hiding his Talent; or, as some read, *concealing*; for he seems to be satisfied in himself in what he had herein done, and he urgeth this his so doing for his Justification? Circumstances considered, this hiding must be understood in direct opposition to the former trading required by Christ, and acted by some of the Servants; which Christ declareth his well-liking of before they had vented and ventured their Talents, as you have heard; like *David Psal. 40.* who would not conceal but declare his righteousness; but this Servant hides or conceals his Talent: and this hiding is to be understood the worst of hidings; it seems to be a voluntary hiding. Some concealings we are (as we may say) necessitated to by *persecution* and *opposition*; but this man

went and digged (took pains) to hide his Talent his Lords money.

Sixtly; What may we understand this Knowledge to be [*I know thee.*] The word here signifies a certain Knowledge, not a Conjectural Knowledge; although this Knowledge in it self is a false perswasion, yet to him it seemed certain, it was rooted and sealed in his heart, and so grew up to a full perswasion; I did firmly and without doubt believe.

But having briefly opened these words, I shall sum up what is teaching to us from them into two parts of Doctrine.

Part 1. That very wicked persons, such as Christ is altogether unacquainted with, and shall eternally reject at his Coming, yet these persons shall assume knowledge of, and great confidence in him: such shall seem at first to have that choice priviledg proper to his most faithful Servants abiding in him, 1 Joh. 2. 28. *Who shall have boldness and confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming.* This is plain, Mat. 7. compared with Luke 13.

Part 2. It is a very dangerous and destructive thing for persons to entertain a false and hard opinion of the Lord, that he is *Austere and Cruel*; how many have been destroyed temporally and eternally from this ground, distrusting that God would not have mercy on them? but give me leave to tell thee, who-ever thou art, that thou hast to do with a very tender and merciful God, that is willing to save to the utmost such as comes to him. My warrant to bear me out so saying is, 2 Cor. 5.

Part 3. It is the nature of slothful negligent persons, as to their own Spiritual Concerns, to quarrel with God and Christ, and impute their miscarriages unto them.

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Part 4. That the dear Son of God, who is goodness and righteousness it self in the very abstract; yet he hath been alwaies liable to the most false and unreasonable imputations: what a plentiful measure of this did Christ meet with when he was one earth? examine his life, and since his ascension the same.

Part 5. That Jesus Christ never meets with more base and unworthy dealing from any, than from those who have received most kindness from him. This was prophesied of *Psal. 41.* and fulfilled in *Judas*, and of his own the Jews; and here one of Christ's own Servants, in whom Christ had reposed Confidence, and trusted him with a part of his estate.

Part 6. Christ expects increase, where he hath been scattering and strawing, as here he had.

Part 7. Distracting slavish fear is the natural fruit of an ill opinion of God.

Part 8. Distracting slavish fear is an effectual stop to industry and labour; when persons are brought to say there is no hope, the effects are very sad: This was *David's* fear, *2 Sam. 6. 9.* *And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, how shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?* *1 Cron. 21. 30.* it stopt industry; But David could not go before it to inquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the Angel of the Lord. True Fear drives to duty; See *Jehosaphat*, See *Noah*, *Heb. 11.* *Phil. 2. 12.* Work with fear and trembling.

Part 9. That very bad and wicked reprobates may retain what they have received, and that with some esteem, in a napkin; Oh then, how weak an argument is it of some who plead they are as true to their principles as ever they were!

Part 10. The vulgar Latin reads *Lo, behold;* persons are apt to bear hard with strong confidence

went and digged (took pains) to hide his Talent his Lords money.

Sixty; What may we understand this Knowledg to be [*I know thee.*] The word here signifies a certain Knowledg, not a Conjectural Knowledg; although this Knowledg in it self is a false perswasion, yet to him it seemed certain, it was rooted and sealed in his heart, and so grew up to a full perswasion; I did firmly and without doubt believe.

But having briefly opened these words, I shall sum up what is teaching to us from them into two parts of Doctrine.

Part 1. That very wicked persons, such as Christ is altogether unacquainted with, and shall eternally reject at his Coming, yet these persons shall assume knowledg of, and great confidence in him: such shall seem at first to have that choice priviledg proper to his most faithfull Servants abiding in him, 1 Joh. 2. 28. *Who shall have boldness and confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming.* This is plain, Mat. 7. compared with *Luke 13.*

Part 2. It is a very dangerous and destructive thing for persons to entertain a false and hard opinion of the Lord, that he is *Austere and Cruel*; how many have been destroyed temporally and eternally from this ground, distrusting that God would not have mercy on them? but give me leave to tell thee, who-ever thou art, that thou hast to do with a very tender and merciful God, that is willing to save to the utmost such as comes to him. My warrant to bear me out so saying is, 2 Cor. 5.

Part 3. It is the nature of slothfull negligent persons, as to their own Spiritual Concerns, to quarrel with God and Christ, and impute their miscarriages unto them.

Part 4. That the dear Son of God, who is goodness and righteousness it self in the very abstract; yet he hath been alwaies liable to the most false and unreasonable imputations: what a plentiful measure of this did Christ meet with when he was one earth? examine his life, and since his ascension the same.

Part 5. That Jesus Christ never meets with more base and unworthy dealing from any, than from those who have received most kindness from him. This was prophesied of *Psal. 41.* and fulfilled in *Judas*, and of his own the Jews; and here one of Christ's own Servants, in whom Christ had reposed Confidence, and trusted him with a part of his estate.

Part 6. Christ expects increase, where he hath been scattering and strawing, as here he had.

Part 7. Distracting slavish fear is the natural fruit of an ill opinion of God.

Part 8. Distracting slavish fear is an effectual stop to industry and labour; when persons are brought to say there is no hope, the effects are very sad: This was *David's* fear, *2 Sam. 6. 9.* *And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, how shal the Ark of the Lord come to me?* *1 Cron. 21. 30.* it stopt industry; But *David could not go before it to inquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the Angel of the Lord.* True Fear drives to duty; See *Jehosaphat*, See *Noah*, *Heb. 11.* *Phil. 2. 12.* Work with fear and trembling.

Part 9. That very bad and wicked reprobates may retain what they have received, and that with some esteem, in a napkin; Oh then, how weak an argument is it of some who plead they are as true to their principles as ever they were!

Part 10. The vulgar Latin reads *Lo, behold;* persons are apt to bear hard with strong confidence

upon negative holiness and righteousness; behold, take notice, I am just, I have saved it whole, for there is thine own. All these Parts are worth our handling and Consideration; only for brevity's sake I shall pass them, and proceed to the close of this Parable.

We have but one remarkable passage more to handle & apply with respect to the slothful servant, and that is, our Lord's reply to the slothful Servant's Plea and Defence, which you have laid down in the 24, 25. verses: Now in these 26 and 27 verses, we have our Lords reply, which divides it self into two general Parts.

First his ill resentment, appearing in his severe Rebuke and Reproof.

Secondly; his Judgment and Sentence ordained and pronounced against him.

First; We have his severe rebuke and reproof, v. 26, 27. and then his Judgment and sentence, v. 28, 29, 30. I shall first endeavour to handle this First part, which contains our Lords reply to what the slothful servant pleads for himself in the two former verses, and it is plain and clear that what he here alleged and pleaded, is so far from satisfieing and pleasing his Lord that he resents it exceeding ill, as appears from these several Circumstances following.

As First, from the placing his rebuke, which he makes the prom or preface of what he had to say; his Lord breaks out in the first place with this his discovery of high dissatisfaction in these words (*thou wicked and slothful servant*) being in the frontispiece.

Secondly; from the nature of this rebuke, which consists in two emphatical epithetes, *thou wicked and slothful*.

Thirdly

Thirdly; In the particular application in that par-

Fourthly, it appears in our Lord's ironical upbraiding of the Pharisees, *verf. 26*, where our Lord in these words seems to be angry with the Servant.

Fifthly; it appears in his angry expostulation* with him v. 27. showing what he ought to have done.

Sixty; in that he chargeth him with incompati-
bilities, and inconsistency with his own knowledg
and principle. In these several circumstances we hear
our Lord breathing forth his displeasure against this

to make these proper observations concerning the words, let us consider and inquire into the words and Circumstances in them & as first, let us inquire into the two Epithets, *Wicked, Stub-*

Secondly; Whether our Lord be in good earnest in these his words, *Thou art a Pharisee*; Whether Christ do only upbraid?

Thirdly; What doth Christ intend, when he saith he should have put his money to the exchangers?

Fifthly; in what sense doth Christ palliate or encourage Usury between man and man?

Burst; As to the two Epithets the Original word (*malice*) *male*) translated *wicked*, is a very Comprehensive word, but hath many acceptations in Scripture, as evil, naught, lewd, dishonest, false, despicable, rude, unskillful: but in this place it is to be understood in the worst sense: it is used to set out the worst kind of wickedness, malice, and guile; it is to be understood in the Superlative degree. See *Acts* 18. 14. *wicked lewdness*, the highest kind of evil that can be exceeding naught. In short, the word is used to set out the wickedness of the Devil himself. See *Mat.* 13. 38.

Children of the wicked one. So 1 Joh. 5. that wicked one touch him not; (Malignus) as if Christ should say, thou most wicked, or thou malignant ill-affected person. Our Lord doth not use this word but upon special occasions: he useth it (Mat. 18. 32.) concerning the servant that had 10000 Talents: forgiven him who was so cruel to his fellow-Servant, O thou wicked Servant; So here thou wicked.

But what was the principal evil in this Servant that Christ referreth unto, which makes him speak so sharply to him as in this word? it will easily be granted he might be called *slothful*, but why *wicked*?

I Answer; There are four Capital evils in him; as first his ungratefulness and unanswerableness to his Masters Love. Secondly; his slighting carriage and terms. Thirdly; his false and untrue charging his Lord. Fourthly; his impudent hardning his Face against his Lord.

In all this, first; his ungratefulness and unanswerableness to his Masters love, and his high intrustment of him: it was no small favour that his Master should intrust him with a part of his estate to improve: Christ expected this servant should have answered his love, and rendred suitable returns. The wickedness of that servant we read of *Mat. 18.* lay in this particular, not answering Love received. O ungratefulness is a high sin, and greatly offends God and Christ. How ill did God take it at *Hezekiah's* hands, not rendring according to the benefit he had received *2 Cron. 32. 25.* Therefore wrath broke out against him. It is wickedness to trample upon the mercies of God.

Secondly; wickedness consists in slighting undervaluing terms of God and Christ. See the character of a wicked man, *Psal. 10.* he *contemns God.* See *Job.*

Job 22. 27. *They say, what can the Almighty do for me?* Nah. 1. 11. *There is one come out of thee that imagined evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor:* this was the sin of the wicked Jews, unto whom Christ speaks, *Mat. 12.* This was the sin of Simon, *Acts 8. 22.* he imagined meanly of the gift of God.

Thirdly; his wickedness lay in his verbal false accusation of his Lord; this is one chief part of the Devils wickedness, from whence he is branded with false accusing the brethren; it is one of his names, the part of a wicked man, *Psa. 10.* That God can neither see nor hear. This was the wickedness of the Jews, *Mat. 12.* that accused Christ that he cast out Devils by the Devil; this was the wickedness that *Job's* friends thought him guilty of in charging God falsely: and for this Christ comes to judge the World, (*Jude 25.*) for hard speeches: This was some part of the slothful Servants evil, he gave hard speeches of his Lord.

Fourthly; his wickedness is further aggravated by his pertinacy, stubbornness, frowardness, and wilfulness: as we may perceive in the two former verses, he hardens his face against his Lord; which is a character of a wicked person. See *Prov. 6. 12.* *A wicked person walketh with a froward mouth, Ch. 21. 29.* *A wicked man hardeneth his face that is against God.* So that we may easily perceive this Servant did deserve this epithet; *thou wicked Servant.*

The next word we are to inquire into is the word *slothful*, which is an emphatical word, it hath near 20 acceptations in Scripture, *thou slothful, sluggish, idle, dull, stopped, hard to be removed, loth to labour;* it signifies to delay, stand still, and many more. By such a comprehensive word our Lord sets out his

dissatisfaction to the highest against this person, he

21 The Lord saith to be even as our Lord
 22 meaning in these words, *that he was as our Lord*

Christ content and agree with him or upbraid him

I Answer. That the speech of Christ must be understood to be *inward* and *upbraiding*; like that spoken to *Adam*, Gen. 3. 22. *The man is become as one of us*: and after this manner the Lord often speaks in Scripture. See Job 40. 12. *Deck thy self with strength and majesty: behold him that is high and abase himself*. It is not likely that Christ did consent with the foolish Servant that he was sullen, that he gathered where he had not sowed, reaped where he had not sown; because this is not true of the Lord, and so is not true of

The fifth thing to be spoken also is, the word that our Lord makes use of to set out his return or advantage, he calls *Usury*: from whence some gather encouragement to be Usurers. The Lord in this word follows the former borrowed metaphors of money, and bank, and trading: so here *Usury*. Great men Stewards dispose of their Lord's moneys to bankers in order to bring in increase. But this borrowing the word, doth not at all palliate or encourage the abominable sin of *Usury*; no more than Christ making use of the unjust Steward for an example to provoke his Disciples to make sure their future estate, doth allow of his fraudulent dealings with his Master; all that Christ instanceth in as to the ways of man, doth not amount to a toleration of their ways; only from their manner, not matter doth Christ make teaching to us: that *Usury* is lawful or unlawful cannot be urged from this Text; only this is true from hence, that *Usury*, yea the largest increase, is not *unlawful*, but required in Spiritual things. But be-
 cause

it is a case of Conscience, whether or how far
 Usury is lawful or unlawful; I shall offer my opi-
 nion according to what I have received in this mat-
 ter to the practice it self; and for orders sake I shall
 speak to the etymology of the word which is here
 translated *Usury*: the Hebrew word (*Neshek*) that *Usury*
 is drawn from, signifies Teeth, and so rendered
 to bite, because (saith *Wilson*, the gain which is taken
 for Monies or *Wares* in respect of lending, doth bite
 and gnaw; especially if he be poor: *Job* 1. 9.
 likening *Usury*, to bite like a Serpent, *Numb.* 21. 9.
 taken with respect to this biting with Serpents. See
Prov. 23. 32. *It is the end it bites like a Serpent.* So
Job 5. 19. *a Serpent bit him.* The Greek word
 seems to be more plain (*Taken*) to be born or brought
 forth, as Children are born and brought forth, and
 so called the increase of a Man. So the word is used,
Mat. 2. 2. *Take* 3. 31. 57. It holds forth an effectual
 substantial increase, to double it self as he or she that
 have a Child doth. Thus did the five and two *Tal-*
ents; they doubled themselves; (which is by *Christ*:
 implicitly called *Usury*, in that he would have had
 the fifth his one Talent done the same. Now this
 bringing forth in the New-Testament is that which is
 called *biting* in the Old-Testament, *Job* 1. 9.
 When to come close to the matter, I shall speak to it
 under three Circumstances, and therein shew when
 it is sinful, or when it is biting *Usury*.
 When it is exacted of the Poor.
 When of a Brother.
 When of any body.
 When of the Poor, then it is apparently sinful.
 See what care the Lord had in this respect, *Exod.* 22.

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25. *Thou shalt not lend upon Usury to any of my People that is poor.* So *Lev. 25. 35, 36.* If thy Brother be poor, and fall to decay, thou shalt relieve him, thou shalt not be an Usurer unto him; thou must not take increase. We have Usury three times exprest, *Ezek. 18. 8, 13, 17.* and all in respect to the Poor, as in the former places named. This is that Usury *Nebuchadnezzar* that holy man inveighs against, *chap. 5.*

2. It is sinful to a Brother of the Church of *Israel*, poor or rich: *Deut. 23. 19.* *Not to thy Brother, to a stranger thou maist:* Then God allowed the cruelty which he doth not allow now. See *Deut. 2. 8 & 20. 17.* They were not only allowed to oppress strangers, but destroy them: therefore it is not definitely to be understood. Strangers in our days and enemies also, are to be fed, if they hunger: Usury is not lawful to a Brother, especially when he borrows for his need; not to augment his Estate, but to supply him with necessities, and is not in a thriving way. If a Brother will expect part of the gain, he must bear (if need be) also part of the loss: therefore there ought to be no Covenant or Contract made for use, but leave it to liberty to turn according to his gain.

3. Biting Usury is sinful to any body because it is oppressive, which is a Sin of a high provoking nature to God, let it be to whom it will, Usury is yoked and linked with Oppression; see *Ezek. 18.* And how *David* without exception makes this a discriminating character of one that shall dwell in God's holy Hill, *Psal. 15.* *He puts not his Money on Usury.* The Prophet *Jeremy* under all his abuses and wrongs purgeth himself in this respect, *Jer. 15.* *I have had neither borrowed nor lent on Usury, and yet they curse him as if he should have said, Had I done so, I might have looked for curses.*

But some may say, *Why doth he purge himself from giving? a man may be necessitated, if he cannot have without.*

Ans. This is sinful upon a twofold account: 1st, Thou art accessory to his sin; 2dly, accessory to thine own ruine. Usury is ranked with unjust gain, *Prov.* 28. 8. and all unjust gain is of the same nature.

But some may say, *What is Biting Usury?*

This Question is hard to determine, because the Borrower must be well considered. But I will boldly affirm, that the practice of several in our days, and in this City, is sinful, who let out Money or Cloaths by the week at unreasonable rates and advantage, as four-pence or six-pence in the pound by the month, or thirty in the hundred, as many do. This is cruel Exortion and sore Oppression, and those who use it lay upon good grounds question their share in God's holy Hill, *Psal.* 15. Such Oppression doth not only pinch and pinch, but eat up persons insensibly. Oh! the sin of your weekly Letters-out of Cloaths to pay so much a week, and Pawn-Broakers who take forty in the hundred, ruins the Poor insensibly, as a man bleeds to death with use. The Magistracy of this Nation are to be highly commended in this respect, who brought Use from ten and eight to six in the hundred, in which they have to a good degree blunted the teeth of this Serpent, that it doth not bite so sharp nor deep.

But some will object, *If it were not for these Week-lenders and Pawn-broakers the Poor might starve.*

Ans. 1. Thirty in the hundred cannot long preserve their lives, if they follow that way.

2. If the Poor who want to borrow would be as careful to return the Principal to Friends they borrow of,

of, as they are, and must be to those, both Principal and exorbitant Interest, they need not be so put at as they are. But this is the mischief, that want of care and punctuality in returning, when they borrow freely without Use, hath forced persons to this way of buying borrowing. But I have made too long digression. Remember I have not yet, in what I have said, asserted, that all Increase is Usury; but that Usury is Increase to buying and hurting.

I now return to the words, and from thence I have taken down ten Parts observable.

1. That all Christ's Servants are by him ranked into two sorts, Good and Faithful, Wicked and Slothful, Wise and Foolish, Sheep and Goats, no medium or middle state.

2. There is no wickedness like the wickedness of Christ's own Servants. Christ seems to beat a trail for them forth to bad as they deserve, he gives Satan's name to them.

3. Slighting words to God and Christ is a character of a wicked person.

4. Slothfulness and negligence in the Lord's Service and Business is very nauseous and distasteful to him, Jer. 48. 19. there is a Curse pronounced on it.

5. It is not nearness of relation to God and Christ will exempt us from being called to account; hence Christ's own Servant, entrusted by him, liable to account.

6. Ironical Rebukes are a manifestation of displeasure from God or Christ.

7. Christ takes exceeding ill to be misunderstood and misrepresented. I have shewed you how the Servant misrepresented his Lord.

8. Wicked men are not true to their own Principles.

ple; this Servant doth not walk up to his own
reason. If Men would walk up to their own Reason,
it would carry them far.

9. Christ's Servants ought to calculate all their
Actions with an eye to their Lord's coming: *Thou
shouldest have put it out, that at my coming I might
have received mine own with usury.*

10. All Christ's Servants, acting as they ought to
do, bear a resemblance of Usurers. Christ doth cer-
tainly expect Use, as well as Principal, of his Servants.

Now all these Parts are worth our handling, but
I must study brevity, according to an Exposition;
therefore I shall pass most of them, and only speak
to the 4th Part briefly.

I shall speak a few words to this one Part: *That
Slothfulness is inexpressibly distastful to God and Christ.*
This was the sin of *Laziceus* Revel. 3. latter end;
Christ is ready to spew her out of his mouth. Christ
could not abide an Idle Servant: see *Mat. 20. Why
standest thou all the day idle?* The place forenamed, *Jer.*
48. 10. is a dreadful word; God pronounceth a
severe Curse against those that do the work of the
Lord negligently, that stood still in opposition to
zeal and motion; that *stand still*, as the word will
bear. This evil the Spirit of God forbids, *Rom. 12.*

not slothful in business, this must not be. — And
there is good reason that slothfulness should be so
distastful to God and Christ, because it is not the
manner of God and Christ acting to us; God acts
with zeal in our behalf: and when the Spirit doth
his office in the heart, it brings forth zeal in us.

2. Slothfulness is a great hinderance to the Propa-
gation of the Gospel in the World. Zeal provokes
many. See *2 Cor. 9. 2.*

3. It is not like Christ; it is prophesied of him,
Psal.

Psal. 69. The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me

Q. But how may we know in our selves whether we are of this slothful temper?

A. 1. When thou hast not thy heart in God's Service, but only the external part: This is to have Male in the Flock, according to *Mal. 1.* and offer unto the Lord a corrupt thing, *v. 14.* which is an accursed service.

2. A slothful Servant is one who is hindred from the Service of God upon small discouragement, imaginary discouragements, apprehensions of danger, &c. See *Prov. 22. 13.* *The slothful man saith, There is a Lion in the way, I shall be slain in the streets;* (and we have the same *Prov. 26. 13.*) a very unlikely thing, yet the slothful man takes hold of this as a ground of discouragement.

3. A slothful person hath no pleasure nor delight nor joy in Christ's Service. It is said of the Sun, *he rejoiceth to run his race, Psal. 19.* An industrious Servant takes great delight in Christ's Service, it is his meat and drink to do his will. This was the Spirit of Christ himself when he was on Earth.

4. A slothful Servant is very confident of his own good estate. See *Prov. 26. 16.* *The sluggard is wise in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* So was *Laodicea*. Whereas an industrious person in Spirituals is always humble.

5. A slothful person acts not up to his strength and light received, he will not put forth his strength.

I shall speak a few words to provoke persons against this sin of Slothfulness; labour against this so distasteful an evil. Take *St. Paul's* counsel (*Rom. 12. 11.*) against sloth, by way of prevention, in nine Particulars.

1. Study the weightiness of Christ's Work, it is curious

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rious Work, it is of eternal concernment; they re-
sult to thy Master as well as to thy self, *Job. 15.*
God is glorified in thy fruit.

2. This Work can never be done profitably nor
acceptably without industry. *The violent take the*
Kingdom by force, Mat. 11. 12.

3. Consider, that pains and labour in good earnest
never failed in this Work, *Prov. 2. 8.* there is a sure
Promise in this matter, *1 Cor. 15. last.*

4. Consider the shortness and uncertainty of the
time we have to do the Lord's Work in; do it whilst
it is day.

5. Consider, the stock and strength by which we
do all is from above, therefore we need not be dis-
couraged, *Phil. 2. 12, 13.*

6. No excuse in Christ's Service will serve, all
these excuses in this Servant will do nothing.

7. Study the near approach of Christ; this is the
Argument, *Luke 12.*

8. Study the great pleasure of a zealous and in-
dustrious life; Labour is pleasure; in Christ's ways
are all Pleasures and Peace.

Lastly, Slothfulness is not only impoverishing,
but undoing: The Stone-wall is broken down, the
House falls down by it. *A slothful man is brother to*
him that is a great waster. We need go no further
than our Text to prove this.

We now proceed to the close of this Parable. That
remarkable passage yet to be handled is the severe sen-
tence and judgment past by Christ upon the slothful
Servant, of whom we have already heard in several
Circumstances. 1. You have been minded of Christ's
favour and respect, shewed to him in trusting of him
with a part of his estate. 2. We have heard of his
proceeding thereupon in his Master's absence, his
biding

hiding and concealing his Talent from use and improvement. 3. We have spoken to, and you have heard of his Master or Lord's proceedings with him as to the first Part of it, His Account called for, His Plea and Defence for himself to his Lord at his coming. 4. We have heard of the ill resentment and dislike his Lord takes at his Plea, which I have shew'd you under several Considerations; amongst which his sharp and severe Rebuke, whereby this Servant is silent, his mouth is stopped; and now his Lord proceeds to sentence, which Sentence we have in the words, ver. 28, 29, 30. *Take therefore the Talent from him, and give it unto him that hath Ten Talents. For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* But I shall principally in the 28th and 30th, for this is only a record of a Law, Rule or Decree, established either then at that present, or else before, which by Christ is found properly applicable to this Servant; for, *from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Which Rule is so proper in such cases to be applied, as that we have it five times hinted by the Evangelists.

This Sentence contains two Parts: First, a punishment of privation, or loss. Secondly, a punishment of infliction or sense.

First, the punishment of privation, ver. 28. *Take the Talent away from him, and give it unto him that hath Ten.*

Secondly, In v. 30. we have his positive punishment of infliction and sense: *Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter darkness.*

In handling this Sentence in these verses, I shall first open some words which want explication. Secondly, Raise those parts properly flowing from them so opened. Thirdly, Apply the whole.

I. *For EXPLICATION.*

1. What may we understand by taking away his Talent.
2. As to Time, when this is done, when doth this Judgment take place.
3. Who are the Executioners that must take it away; because Christ is said to speak to those that stood by, or the Servants, *Luke 19. 22.*
4. Why given to him that had ten Talents rather than to him that had less.
5. How can we understand this taking away that which he hath not.
6. What by this Unprofitableness.
7. What kind of Punishment is this utter or exterior Darkeness.
8. What is this *weeping* or *gnashing of teeth*.

First, What is this *taking away*. The Greek word signifies to snatch, or take by violence. But this we must carry along with us in our minds, that this passage is spoken to accommodate the Parable we read of, delivered to him *ver. 15.* or *giving*, which we cannot understand properly that he had so much money told out to him in a literal sense; neither can we so understand the taking or snatching away. But if we diligently observe the Parable, we shall find it all one to take his Talent from him, or him from his Talent. The taking away the Talent is the same with a severe stripping him of his Trust and Profession;

session ; As it is with the foolish Virgins and Goats, separate him from the place wherein before he stood, and the capacity he had been in before his Talent was taken away, when he was discovered and disowned by Christ. This was the taking away of Judas his Talent when Christ discovered him, when Christ speaks these words, Luk. 22. 48. *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* his Talent before was, that he was numbred amongst Christ's Servants ; he had something of Heaven upon that account. This taking the Talent away is the same in effect with Christ's gathering out of his Kingdom every thing that offends, *Mat. 13. 41, 48, 49.* The first Part of Christ's Sentence is, *Depart*, Excommunication from the presence of Christ. This is that (*ἀνάθεμα μαργαρίθα*) which we read of *1 Cor. 16. last*, *let him be accursed when the Lord shall come.* This is to shame and degrade him, and is the first part of his Sentence ; as when one is degraded from his dignity his Robes are stript off : contrary to the Faithful and Godly, who shall stand in that day ; see *1 Job. 2. 28. Psal. 1.* his Talent is then taken away, when he is discovered to be an Hypocrite, *1 Cor. 4. 5.* Secondly, To take away his Talent, supposeth his utter, total and eternal disabling, from ever having opportunity of improving it again. This is the night coming when no man can work any more, his stock being taken away, now he must cease.

Secondly, *When doth this Judgment take place of taking away?*

Ans. At the personal return of his Lord. This is plain in our context, *ver. 19.* when Christ hath received the Kingdom, and is returned ; when the Bridegroom cometh, as before, the same is effected ; when death cometh, it doth cease. Indeed it happens with

with some, that their Talent is taken away; either sometimes it is lost as to exercise, or else they are discovered: but if the slothful escape with the Talent here, it will effectually be taken away when Christ comes, *then shall every man have praise of God*; this is the Time resolv'd upon, *ver. 31.* when the Son of man comes in his Glory, and the holy Angels with him; — persons may hold their Talents, or Intruments, or a shew of them till then.

Thirdly, As to the Executioners of this Law; *Is it their fellow-servants that must take the Talent away?* No, it is plain that the Angels are the Servants, those that stand by Christ in that his coming: therefore when he cometh he is attended with all his Angels, *Mat. 13. 39. & 41. 49.* The Angels are the Reapers, they gather out of Christ's Kingdom that which offends, they sever the Wicked from amongst the Just.

Fourthly, *Why given to him that hath ten?* this is so strange a Circumstance that the Servants the Angels are not able to understand; *Luke 19. 25.* Lord (say they) *he hath ten.* This seems strange. Whereupon Christ recites the Law in that case; for, *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance*; he that was able to improve much, shall have much more. This Circumstance cannot be understood properly, that the faithful Servants of Christ shall receive addition from those that are wicked: but the Moral to us-ward is, to set forth the great esteem Christ hath to Industry, and his palpable severe dislike of the contrary. The scope of this passage is to teach us that the evils and iniquities of some Professors shall much and greatly redound to those that are eminently righteous. This is God's way, to set the righteousness of the Righteous against the wickedness of

the Wicked, that so their Righteousness may shine. So he did by *Noah* in his day, he magnifies *Noah's* righteousness from the wickedness of others, *Gen. 6. 7.* We have four expressions in *Noah's* case in opposition: 1. It is said, *but Noah found Grace*; 2. *Build thee an Ark*; 3. *I establish my Covenant with thee*; 4. *Thee have I seen righteous*. These are singularly spoken to *Noah*, and of him, in opposition to the rest. So *Ezek. 44.* those that went astray with the Idolaters advanced the praise of those who were faithful. So doth Christ take from *Israel* to give unto the *Centurion*, *I have not found so great faith no not in Israel*. This is usual with Men too, as with respect to Children and Servants, to make the faults of one to contribute to the others praise. So here, let him that is so worthy be made more worthy. So it is plain, that some who have had large Intrustments from Christ, and have improved them, shall shine as the Sun, shall have very large Returns; though those that have least shall have enough, yet this is a truth, That some shall abound in Glory beyond others, one Star shall differ from another.

Fifthly; *How may we reconcile this seeming Contradiction, to take from him that he hath not?*

I answer; It is true in both senses: *he hath, he hath not*; he hath in Stock, he hath nothing in Increase. He that hath Grace or Gifts, and doth not improve them, is so like him that hath none, that he may fitly bear the name of not having. To have, is to improve and put forth. We have an Argument in common, *That which appears not, is not*. So here, he that manifests no Grace, is equal with him that hath none: therefore saith the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 28. Let us have Grace, that we may serve God acceptably*.

Sixthly;

Sixthly ; How is this Servant unprofitable ? this is the Epithet put upon him here : Why unprofitable, may some say ? was it possible, let him have done what he would or could, to be profitable ? are we not taught to say, When we have done all, we are unprofitable Servants ?

I answer, If he that had done all he could, was an unprofitable Servant, then much more him that comes short of what was commanded must needs be unprofitable : Though we cannot profit God by what we do, yet we may profit men like our selves ; here is unprofitable. But I rather think this term is made use of to accommodate the Parable, as before he is said to require his own with Usury, or advantage ; so this term profit, answers to such a dialect of speaking. It is false and wicked to say, we can profit God ; this is that which *Eliphaz* insinuates against *Job*, *Job* 22. Can a man be profitable to God ? the answer is in the Negative, No. And as it is wickedness to say, we can profit God by what we do ; so it is also to say, Obedience and Industry in Spirituals do not profit our selves. *Elihu* thought it a wicked and bad charge, *Job* 34.

But some may say, Is not man profitable unto God ? why then are God's People called God's Treasure, and his Portion ?

I ans. 1. They may be so called from that high esteem he bears to his People. 2dly, It is true, that God is exceedingly pleased, though not profited : that he is mightily pleased, appears from *Luke* 12. 37. He will gird himself, and come forth and serve them.

Seventhly, What may we understand in this part of the punishment, referring to the positive punishment of sense ; 1. Cast him, 2dly, into darkness, 3dly, utter darkness ?

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I answ. 1. To cast, implies a violent casting with detestation; as it is used by Christ elsewhere: *If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee.* Thus the Lord is said to cast out the Nations.

But 2dly, *Why into Darknes?*

Answ. We read of Darknels in Scripture under a twofold Consideration; 1. Proper and natural; 2. Improper and metaphorical Darknels.

1. Natural Darknels, occasioned by withdrawing the Sun, or by its Eclipse. Such a Darknels was upon *Abraham, Gen. 15.* called *an hour of Darknels.* It is one of the plagues of *Egypt, Exod. 11. 1.* This is a sore Judgment, this is the Darknels that *Job* wisheth upon the day he was born in, *Job 3.* This Darknels we reade of at the time of Christ's Crucifixion; and it is a sad and dreadful Judgment.

But 2dly, we have Darknels metaphorically understood, and that under a four-fold Consideration; 1. The natural unregenerate state of sin; see *Eph. 5. 8. ye were Darknels.* 2. A state of Darknels in the understanding; this was the state of the Gentiles, *Eph. 4. 18.* 3. Death is a state of Darknels, *Job 17. 13.* Death is the dark bed. 4. Darknels is put for the most deep and dismal state of Sorrow; as Joy is a state of Light, so is Sorrow a state of Darknels. A state of Joy is a lightsom state, opposed to Darknels: see *Esth. 8. 16. Psal. 97. 11. Col. 1. 12.* So, 2dly, the depth of Sorrow is stiled Darknels; see *Job 19. 8. He hath set Darknels in my paths,* saith *Job*, that is, Sorrow of the deepest sort. And *Job 30. 26. I looked for Light, and behold Darknels.* See *Eccles. 5. 17. all his dayes he eateth in Darknels.* Now all these metaphorical exquisit Darknells of Sorrow do but weakly epitomize that Darknels of our Text, which is the eternal punishment of the Reprobate. Therefore

fore this Darkness is comprehensive of unspeakable Sorrow and Affliction, when the Lord by his Prophet *Isaiah* sets forth the eternal punishment on the worst of sinners, this is it, *Isa.* 8. last, he saith, *He shall be driven to Darkness.* This is the punishment appointed for the unbelieving, (*Mat.* 8. 12.) of him without the wedding-garment, *Mat.* 22. 13. Of those lapsed Professors, *2 Pet.* 2. 17. It is the Darkness of the lapsed Angels, *2 Pet.* 2. 4. All their punishment is said to be Darkness. So this unprofitable Servant's is Darkness.

Q. But why Darkness?

A. 1. Because it was their choice here, *1 Job.* 3. 14. *they loved Darkness rather than Light.* 2. Because his state shall be quite contrary to the state of the Saints, which is a state of Light, *Col.* 1. 12. the Saints are, whilst here, Children of the Light.

Qu. But why utter Darkness?

Ans. We have this word three times made use of; see *Mat.* 8. 22. and here in our Text; it is to set forth the perfection of this Darkness, *chap.* 5. *No Light at all.* 2. *Utter Darkness* respects the place; exterior signifies out, or beyond the bounds of that Light where Christ shall dwell, without the verge thereof. This is the portion of the unprofitable Servant, and all other such-like; as they loved Darkness here, so it shall be their miserable portion hereafter.

Obj. But why is it added, *where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?*

Ans. This term doth further explain the nature of the punishment of this Servant, that it is not barely a privation of Light, but a Prison of sore and grinding intolerable pain: so that it is plain that the future punishment is not only a punishment of loss, but of sense. From hence we read of some who did foolishly fancy two sorts of Hells, one hot, another cold, in

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which could place the teeth chatter'd : But we are not necessitated to believe any such thing from this Text. It is well called a fancy. For,

1. Weeping is the effect of deep sorrow and loud complaints. See *Numb.* 11. 10. *Ezra* 3. 13. *Isa.* 65. 19. it implies a dreadful crying out ; it is translated *Calamity*, *Job* 30. 13.

2. *Gnashing of teeth* is a discovery of Envy, Rage, and the effects of exquisit Sorrow and Misery, *Psal.* 35. 37. of Rage, *Act.* 7. 54. sometimes Sorrow and grinding-pain is the cause of grinding the teeth, as persons do in extream misery, filled with envy at the prosperity of their fellow-servants, vexation at their own loss, out of folly; as we may gather from the Parable of *Dives* in Hell, *Luk.* 16. *I am*, saith he, *grievously tormented in this flame.*

Having thus opened the words, I shall now according to my promise, lay down those Doctrinal Conclusions contained in the words thus opened, with an eye to the Context : there are ten Parts or Doctrinal Conclusions that I shall lay down, and speak a brief word to each, and so wind up these verses.

Part 1.

That Jesus Christ shall be victorious, and shall overcome in Judgment ; every mouth shall be stopped before him ; Jesus Christ hath stopp'd the mouth of this pernicious Pleader.

Part 2.

That the second Coming of Jesus Christ is a stripping, discovering day, a day of pulling off of vizards.

Part 3.

The Angels are Christs subordinate Ministers and Executioners at that day.

Part 4.

That Christ's way of proceeding in Judgment is to
exalt

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exalt the Faithfulness of such as are so, by the Wickedness of others; the dispraise and shame of the one, is the glory of the other.

Part 5.

It is Christ's never-failing Rule and Maxime, That Industry in Spirituals shall produce abundance. We have it five times exprest from Christ's mouth.

Part 6.

It is a certain truth, That stripping, bereavement, and poverty, is the never-failing portion of the slothful Servant.

Part 7.

That Christ's proceeding in Judgment with his unfaithful Servants, is with violence and desolation; Cast ye.

Part 8.

It is highly displeasing to Christ, when we are not profitable to our selves.

Part 9.

Darkness, utter Darkness, is the portion of Satan and wicked men, as well such within as without the Church.

Part 10.

That the greatness and exquisiteness of the Wrath and Misery of Condemned Sinners, will occasion Envy, Rage, Vexation, vented in lamentable Clamour, with gnashing of teeth.

I shall speak a very brief word to each of these.

1. That Christ shall overcome in Judgment. This Part I gather from his silencing this Pleader. That word shall be fulfilled, that every mouth shall be stopt, when he comes to plead with men. This Servant is now dumb, like the Man we read of, Mat. 22. Christ does but ask him a question, and he is speechless: This David prophesied of, Psal. 51. 4. That thou mightst

mightest be justified when thou speakest, and overcomest when thou judgest, or pleadest : Christ will come the day in Judgment against the most arrogant Pleader. What bold presumptuous Pleaders doth Christ meet with, *Mat. 7.* with *Luk. 13.* yet what David saith *Psal. 1.* is true, *they cannot stand in Judgment.* This man in our Text had liberty to plead and reason with his Lord as long as he had any thing to say, and now he can say nothing why Sentence may not be pronounced against him. If this shall be the Power of Christ in that day, then take *David's* Counsel, *Ps. 2.* *Kiss the Son before that day come :* He is now willing to be reconciled to thee ; *Make peace with Him before that day,* as the Prophet *Isaiab* directs *chap. 27.* and, *Now acquaint thy self with Him, Job 22.* So much for the first Part.

2. *That the Day of Christ's second Coming shall be a stripping, unmaking, discovering day.* I shewed you in the Explication, that the taking away did principally consist in his discovery and shame, cutting asunder, or cutting off, (as you have heard) as to that Servant, *Luke 12. 46.* which is the same kind of punishment. This Servant went for current before his Master and Christ found him in his House, as he did him without the Wedding-garment, *Mat. 22.* This day will be a sad day for Hypocrites when Christ comes, they may well be afraid of that day. *Isa. 13.* 14. *In this day every secret thing shall be discovered; that which was done in secret in Closets, shall be published upon the House tops ;* that is the very proper time of discovery, *1 Cor. 4. 5.* yea, *every secret thing shall be revealed, Eccl. 12. 14.* This may teach us to be thorow and cordial for God in what we do, or in what we profess. Sincerity is that which will stand thee in stead, and nothing else. The varnish and painting

painting of the Hypocrite shall then be washed off, and he must lye open in his colours. This should put each of us upon the Test before that Day come. Examine and judge thy self before, that so thou mayst not be condemned in that Day : for every man's work must be tryed by fire ; the Day shall try it. So much for the second Part.

3. *The Angels are Christ's subordinate Officers, in that day they are to degrade and take away.* That Jesus Christ in his next coming is attended with multitudes of Angels, yea all his holy Angels, is plain in Scripture, both in the old and new Testament ; see *Psal. 68.* But I shall have occasion to say more to this afterwards. I have, in opening the words, shewed you that the Reapers are the Angels, and those that gather out of the Kingdom that which offends, are the Angels. This sets forth the high and excellent Nature of Christ who comes so gloriously attended : when Christ was born they worshipped Him, *Heb. 1.* by appointment, and in this day they shall serve Him. See how far Christ is above Angels, they waited on Him in His Temptations, *Matth. 4.* *The Angels came and ministered unto Him.* They also waited on Him in His last Passion, they then ministering unto Him. What a dreadful and glorious Appearance will this be then, when they shall all attend on him ! the Angels are then his great Host and Attendants in that day, He comes then in Power and great Glory.

4. *That the slothfulness and wickedness of some of Christ's Servants shall redound to th' augmentation of the glory and reward of the other who are faithful : Give it to him that hath ten.* He had a large portion before, having doubled ; he had ten before, yet he must have this augmentation. Christ will heap Honour upon the

the Faithful in that day. Give it to him that has it. How does this set forth the unexpressible respect that Christ bears to Faithfulness and Industry; he knows not how to gratifie him enough; rather than such a one shall not be served answerably, He will come forth and serve him himself, *Luk. 12.* Because I shall meet with something like those in the next Part.

5. That what Christ doth in this case is the answer to a standing Rule and Maxim laid down by himself. That Industry in Spirituals shall produce abundance. We have this Rule five times hinted by the Evangelists, *Mat. 13. 12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given.* This Christ gives in Answer to the Question propounded by his Disciples why he spake to the multitude in Parables: He answers, *because they should not understand,* as is evident in the two verses following, in regard they had not improved their Understandings, they should be taken away: But *ver. 16. Blessed are your eyes, for they see;* that is, you have been improving what you have, you shall have more Knowledge. None shall set forward in Christ's Wayes in good earnest but shall find great encouragement; see *Mark 4. 24, 25. To him that hath, shall more be given;* i. e. that is willing to be found putting forward; for, *he that hath, to him shall be given, Luk. 8. 18. To him that hath, shall be given, Luk. 19. 26. Unto every one that hath, shall be given.* This is God's standing Rule, both here and hereafter. Whatsoever the Evangelists leave out, they will not leave out this passage which is so considerable. Therefore our Lord saith, *Joh. 7. He that doth my Will, shall know of my Doctrine,* according to this Rule. But the Jews were short here, they would not improve, but bauk'd their own Knowledge and Reason, and so deserv'd to be blinded.

Use.

Use. What a door is here opened in this for Industry, *To him that bath, shall be given;* that is, that puts forward by way of improvement what he hath; by this means, a little knowledge shall be made a great deal, and rewarded as a great deal. If we do but endeavour to improve that little knowledge we have, it will be made more. *Apollo*, who knew but in part (*Act. 18.*) concerning Christ Jesus, being willing to be instructed, came to know more perfectly. How have we seen the truth of this in our days! How have some from small gifts come to great increase here! and this shall be but a weak glimpse of what shall be hereafter to those whom Christ shall find faithful in that day. We have a Proverb amongst men, that *he that bath enough, shall have more.* It is certainly true in this case, when Christ speaks of rewarding the Faithful, He speaks under a fourfold gradation, *Luke 6. 38. He shall have good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,* to set out the abundant reward upon the duty of Charity and Alms.

6. The sixth Part is the certainty of the contrary, *That non-improvement of what we have ushereth in poverty and indigency.* See in all the forenamed places, and you never find the promise to Industry, but you find in the same place a threatening to the Non-improver; *Take from him* is Christ's determination. This shall be the great aggravation of all unbelievers and unworthy walkers, that they have, and have not improved, *Take from him that he hath.*

But some will object, *he had it not really*, because *Luke 8. 18.* saith, *he seemed to have so;* that it was but a supposed, not a real Talent.

Ans. This is but one place of the five that reads so; and the vulgar Latin reads *thinks he hath*, which must

must respect his improvement, not his stock : he thinketh he hath that he hath not, and so finds disappointment. This Consideration tends to the same end with the former, to provoke Industry and Improvement of what we have.

7. *That Christ's proceeding with his own in Judgment will be with violence and detestation; Cast him out.* Christ's day of Grace, Favour, and Lamb-like Meekness then is over, according to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, chap. 42. 13. See how severe the Sentence is upon him that had not the Wedding-garment ; it is the day of Christ's Wrath, and it will appear ; there shall not be the least dram of Favour then in Christ's Face, no not to those nearly related to Him in Profession if they have not been faithful. Consider this all that are Professors.

8. *It is highly displeasing to Christ when we are unprofitable to our selves.* The great love God bears to his creature makes Him afford him great means to deliver him from wrath to come. Now when they slight this means, it highly provokes God. Take notice of that severe word of Christ, *Joh. 3. 36. He that believes not on the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him* : whereas if he had not believed, that eternal profit had been his own. See the tender love of God to his creature, that is angry at the unbelief and disobedience of man, not because he wrongs Him, but his own Soul.

9. *Utter Darkness is the state of the Devil and wicked men.* See *Jude* v. 6. compared with ver. 13. the same punishment the Devil is reserved unto, is that which the slothful and wicked Servant shall have. But I shall speak more fully to this afterwards.

10. *The exquisiteness and extremity of the torments*

wicked men, shall not only occasion inward sorrow, but outward dolour; it shall be exprest by Envy, Rage, gnashing of teeth, weeping, crying, howling, with great noise: as those in Glory shall sing for joy, Isa. 65. 14. so they shall howl for sorrow and vexation of spirit. But, according to my promise, I have but touched these, because I shall afterward meet with some of them again. Now I have done with the 30th verse.

We now proceed to ver. 31. *When the Son of man shall come in his Glory, and all his holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory.*

There is very little variation in the reading of these words; only the Vulgar Latin reads *And when*, but generally they are read as here, without that particle: and some do make the whole from ver. 13. to this 31, an entire Paragraph, and a Parenthesis, a digression from the business in hand. But I see no cause why it should be taken so. I understand the whole of this Chapter to contain three Parables, all tending to set forth the just, righteous, and severe proceedings with good and bad Professors or Church-members; — and that, at His second Coming, the Church shall contain good and bad in it, hath been largely proved.

It was Christ's manner of proceeding, to bring several Parables to illustrate one and the same thing, as you may see, *Luke 15*: we have there (as here) three Parables to set forth the same thing, the *lost Goat*, and the *lost Sheep* and *Prodigal* and all to set out the lost estate of a sinner; and the desire after, and rejoicing of God in his return. So we have here Christians set forth by *wise* and *foolish Virgins*, by
faithful

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faithful and idle and slothful Servants, by Sheep and Goats.

We have in this latter part of this Chapter, from ver. 31 to the end, our Lord set forth under the similitude of a *Shepherd* and a *Flock*; a Shepherd in his strict observation and inspection that he may make into good and bad Church-members, who (*Erasmus* saith) are mixed together in the Church at present. And it is no new thing for God's People to be compared to Sheep, both in the Old as well as New Testament we find it. See *Ezek. 34*. God's ancient People set forth by *Sheep and Goats* in one Fold, ver. 17, 18. God sets out his People in Scripture by clean beasts, not unclean. The Goat was a clean creature, and allowed for Sacrifice; a Kid of the Goats was as acceptable as a Lamb of the flock: but when God will set forth wicked men, He speaks of them under the similitude of *Lions, Wolves, Dogs*, and such-like unclean Beasts. But I come to the words.

We may sum up the whole of these verses into these four Parts, or Heads.

1. We have a description of the great Glory, Splendor, Throne, Royalty and Attendance of *JESUS CHRIST* in his second Appearance and Coming.

2. We have the great Congregation or gathering that will be unto Him, and before His Throne, at this His second Coming, exprest by a figure, *All Nations*.

3. We have the curious and exact Segregation and strict Division that *CHRIST* will make of this vast number into two Parts, *Sheep and Goats*.

4. We have the Examination, Tryal, and final Sentence upon both Numbers according to their Works.

The

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That which lieth first in order before us is the first of these Heads, which is a third Relation of Christ's second Coming. We had two before in this Chapter, first, His Coming under the capacity of a Bridegroom; Secondly, as a Lord or Nobleman; and here, as a glorious King on his Throne.

Now we have in this Relation of Christ's second Coming four Circumstances considerable.

1. The Capacity that He then comes in, which is as *Son of man*.

2. The Glory He shall come in, here called emphatically *His Glory*.

3. The great Attendants He shall have in this day; all the Holy Angels.

4. That in this Appearance of His, He shall place Himself upon a Glorious Throne. Of these briefly in order.

1. He comes as *Son of man*, which is not an empty Epithet. Jesus Christ is near an hundred times in Scripture stiled *Son of man*; not half so many *Son of God*: and as often is this title applied to him upon his second Coming, as upon any other account. See *Mat.* 16. 27, 28. *Luke* 18. chap. 19. chap. 22. & 21. 27, 36, and many times more. So it is plain, that when Christ comes again, He comes as Son of Man. That Jesus Christ shall assume this Name, with respect to this day of His Coming, is so plain, that it is needless to multiply Scriptures to prove it. But that which will be more needful to insist upon, is to enquire, *Why it may be thought he doth so often render himself under this capacity.*

First, He is stiled *Son of man*, to shew the propriety and reality of his Person; Son of Man, and Man is the same. That He shall come as a Man in this day, see *Act.* 17. 31. *He shall judge the World by that*
P Man

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Man whom he hath appointed. Here he is called *Man*, who in our Text is called *Son of Man*. Christ would have us know, that in all His Offices to us-ward, He is, and acts in them as the Son of Man, as a Man in his Preaching and Conversing on Earth; In His Death a Man; In His Resurrection a real Man. A&. 24. *Feel me, saith Christ, a Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,* Joh. 20. A&. 7. 56. Stephen saw Him so, *I see the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God* in His Mediatorship. 1 Tim. 2. 5. *There is one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus.* In His coming again He is a real Man; therefore it is recorded as to His Coming, Rev. 1. 7. *Every Eye shall see Him.* So that He may well by himself be styled *Man*, or *Son of Man*. So Daniel foresaw Him in a Vision of His second Coming, Dan. 7. 13. *He shall appear as the Son of Man*; that is, real substantial Man.

2dly, He is called *Son of Man*, to set out the foundation of his Exaltation, which was founded in his great Humility. For *Son of Man* is a title of diminution, a lessening title, an Epithet to set out Meanness, Lowness. That it is often used, see Num. 23. 19. *God is not a Man, that he should lie*; where it is used by way of diminution. So it is used Job 26. 6. *Son of man, which is a worm.* So Psal. 8. *What is Man, or the Son of Man?* Ezekiel is near an hundred times called the *Son of Man*; and, as the judgment of the Learned is, it was to humble him. Ezekiel was a Man wrapt up in the Visions of God, and he might be apt to think of himself above a Man; he lived so much in Heaven as that he might be ready to think he was above the Earth, and not of the Earth: therefore God in this stile minds him often of his original, *Son of Man*. It is recorded of some proud

proud men, who would derive their pedigree from the Gods, or from the Stars, as *Alexander the Great* would be called the Son of *Jupiter*, the Son of the Sun; he did think it below him to be call'd Son of Man. In our Lord's styling himself *Son of Man*, He bears in his mind his former low estate, which gave Him a right to this his Glory; as the Apostle in *Phil. 2. 5.* lays the foundation of Christ's Glory in his Humiliation: and we have an eminent place to this purpose, *Job 5. 27. And hath given him Authority to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man.* This gives Him right to this his Glory.

3dly, *Son of Man*, to set out the suitableness of Christ to have converse and fellowship with Men, which makes society with Him very desirous, and the contrary very burdensome: Therefore *Israel* begg'd of God not to speak Himself in his Glory, but to speak unto them by a Man like themselves; and it was reckoned a mercy to them when God did so condescend to them in it, *Deut. 11.* We are Sons of Men, therefore cannot be capable of communion with the Son of God.

4thly, *Son of Man*, to shew that he shall be glorified in the same body that he suffered in: as his visage was more marred than any, *Isa. 52.* so his visage shall be more glorious. Christ shall have a glorious Body, *Phil. 3.* this was figured out in the Transfiguration, *Mat. 16.*

5thly, *Son of Man*, as he is the second *Adam*, so called *1 Cor. 15. By Man came Death, by Man came the Resurrection of the Dead*; Christ triumphs and is victorious, conquers and recovers all that the first man lost. These Circumstances considered, it is not an empty title when Christ calleth himself in his second Coming, *Son of Man.* The use of this Consideration:

Use.

Doth Christ appear as Son of Man, or real Man? Then this may serve for instruction against those vain and airy imaginary Conceits as to Christ's Coming. Many that conceit his coming only in the Spirit, and invisable, do not take notice that he is Son of Man in this his glorious Coming. This Doctrine, however understood in our dayes, is a feeding, nourishing Doctrine. Christ teacheth his Disciples to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, *Joh. 6. 51 to 58.* which in effect is to have our Faith conversant upon the reality of Christ, that he had Flesh and Blood as we.

Qu. But how doth this nourish?

I ans. It informs us and satisfieth us that Christ took and carries our nature on him, *Heb. 2. 16, 17.* See how the Apostle applies this Consideration to nourishment to the Hebrew Church.

2. Christ by this assuming our Nature, puts himself into a capacity to be a Sacrifice for us, as *St. Peter* speaks *1 Pet. 2. 24. He bare our sins in his own Body on the Tree.* *Heb. 10. A Body hast thou prepared me.* Christ overcame, as Son of Man, both the World and the Devil. This may be a ground of encouragement to the common sort of men that they may do so, and it is laid down for that end *Joh. 16. I have overcome the World;* and herein Christ is but as the first-fruits.

The second Particular we are to speak unto is, the Glory that Christ shall come in in that day; Christ shall then have a distinct Glory of his own besides the Father's Glory. See *Mat. 16. 27. Mark 8. 38.* Christ is said to come in His, and in his Father's Glory. Now Jesus Christ must either be understood, 1. of internal and essential, *Exod. 33.* or 2dly, external and visible shining Glory and Splendor, brightly

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as the shining of the Sun, glorious and visible. This is called *Glory*, 1 Cor. 15. *One glory of the Sun, another glory of the Moon.* This outward Splendidness in appearance *Job* calls his *Glory*, *Job* 19. *They have (saith he) stript me of my Glory.* This must be understood in God's words to *Job* chap. 40. *Deck thyself with Glory and Beauty.* Visible *Glory* is sometimes attributed to Apparel, as Isa. 63. *Who is this glorious in Apparel.* Now that Christ shall have such a visible splendor as to his garb, is plain in Scripture, see *Dan.* 10. *Rev.* 1. This *Peter*, *James* and *John* saw in the Mount. And this *Glory* of Christ is rendered distinct from his Power; therefore he is said to come in *Power and great Glory*, *Mat.* *Mark*, *Luke*. This *Glory*, as his Robes, is such a *Glory* as every one shall not be able to behold; nay, it will be a special favour to be admitted to behold this King in his *Glory*, *Isa.* 33.

This may serve to inform us of the vast difference as to the *Glory* between Christ's first and second Coming. In his first Coming he had no glory upon him: it was prophesied *Isa.* 53. that he should come *without Beauty, or form, or comeliness*; then there was no outward glory or desirableness in him; He came mean and poor every way, as to the outward; in his second Coming he shall be clothed with *Glory*.

2dly, Consider that all this unexpressible *Glory* that Christ shall then be clothed with, is but the same that all Christ's true and faithful Servants shall be clothed with also: for Christ and they shall be glorified together, *Rom.* 8. 17. — *if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together.* *Col.* 3. 4. *We shall appear with him in Glory.* *Phil.* 3. *Our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious Body.* O what

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can be greater comfort and encouragement to Christians in bearing the image of Christ in his Sufferings and low estate, than to think that you shall be glorified with him. That though you have been among the Pots *Pf. 68.* you shall be *covered with yellow Gold.* See what *St. John* saith, *1 John 3. 2. We shall be like him, we shall see him as he is.* And consider that Christ's great design in his abasement, was, that he might bring *many Sons unto Glory*, *Heb. 2.* Therefore Christians have cause sufficient to slight present meanness and sufferings. Christians may say, as *St. Paul*, *Rom. 8. 18. I reckon the sufferings of this present time, &c.* Thus much for the second circumstance. The Glory Christ shall come in.

The third Circumstance in this his Coming is, His Attendance the Angels. I had occasion to touch upon this before in the former verse, when I shewed you that the Angels should be Christ's subordinate Servants to execute his Will as to the slothful Servant. Now have we the same more fully attested in this Consideration; for from that and the other ends we here find Christ attended with Angels. We have three Circumstances considerable as to them:

1. The Certainty of their coming with him.
2. Their Number.
3. Their Nature.

1. It is here fore-spoken by Christ, as a certain truth, that the Angels shall then come with him.

2. That all the whole body and host of them.

3. These Angels are express'd by their Nature, *Holy*, we have three Predications in Scripture, of the Nature of Angels. 1. They are said to be mighty, *2 Thess. 1. 7. Mighty Angels.* 2dly, said to be *Elect*, *1 Tim. 5. 21.* 3dly, They are said to be *holy Angels*. And it is an eminent qualification in Angels that

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that they are Holy, so called *Mark* 8. 38. *Luke* 9. 26. they are *very holy*: and it must needs be that Christ's attendants be holy, these so near to Christ must be holy.

But some may object from *Job* 4. 18. *He chargeth his Angels with folly*, which in Scripture-language is as much as to say with sin.

I answer; Some here understand this to be spoken of the bad Angels which fell; they he might well charge with sin: But this cannot be the meaning of it. 2. Some understand the good Angels. 3. But others think neither good nor bad, as understood personally, but with respect to the nature of Angels; he chargeth the Angelical nature with sin, because a Regiment of them fell. But I think it may be understood comparatively compared with God who is holy in the abstract, They are chargeable with folly, because there is none holy as the Lord; As there is none immortal as Him, *1 Tim.* 6. 16. *He only hath immortality*; so He only is holy. So that it may be true that the Angels of themselves may be holy according to our Text, and yet in comparison with God chargeable with folly.

Oh what a glorious and large Attendance shall Christ have when he comes! What! all his Angels! what a vast number then must he have come with him! *Ainsworth* reads *Psal.* 68. *Twice ten thousand thousands of Angels*, v. 17. or double myriads, or innumerable, they cannot be numbred, *Heb.* 12. 22. innumerable company. As *Abraham's* seed could not be numbred; so neither can Christ's attendants, those Angels, be numbred. Oh what an amazing sight will this be to Christ's enemies, and what a rejoicing sight to Christ's true Spouse! O who would not be interested in Christ at that day! and how

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unspeakably dreadful will it be at that day for Christ not to know you, or be ashamed of you, *Mark* 138.

We now proceed to the fourth Circumstance considerable in the first Head, relating to the Glory and splendor of Christ's second Coming, which lyeth in the glorious Throne thus exprest, *Then shall he sit upon the Throne of his Glory*; it shall be a most Glorious Throne. God's Throne is called a *Glorious Throne*, *Jer.* 14. 21. So also is Christ's Throne called a Glorious Throne, *Mat.* 19. 28. — *when the Son of man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory*: where we read that Christ as Son of Man, according to our Text, shall have a Glorious Throne; *Throne of Glory* supposeth very high Glory; as we may gather by considering it in opposition to the Throne of Iniquity, spoken of, *Psal.* 94. 20. High ruling Iniquity is stiled a *Throne of Iniquity*. So at this Sessions of Christ he shall be cloathed with Ruling Glory.

The Scripture speaks of three Thrones; first that Throne which is in the highest Heavens, or, as we read *Eph.* 4. 10. *far above all Heavens*. This is called *the Throne of God's Holiness and Glory*, *Isa.* 63. 15. And we read of several Heavens: 1. The Cloudy-Heavens, the Air up to the Moon. 2. The Planetary-Heavens, where the Stars are. And we read of a third, called *the Heaven of Heavens*, *1 King.* 8. 27. or, the third Heaven, which is that Heaven *St. Paul* speaks of *2 Cor.* 12. 2. there called *the third Heaven*.

Secondly, We read of another Throne pitcht in Heaven, of a lower or middle Heaven or Region: this we understand is spoken of, *Dan.* 7. 8. where it is said *one sat like the Son of Man*. This Throne was shewed to *John*, *Rev.* 4. about which Throne the twenty four Elders and four living ones are, and the Lamb

Lamb in the midst of it. This Throne shall appear when the lower Heavens shall depart as a Scroll, *Rev. 6.* On this Throne Christ sits, called the *Lamb*; and this answers to what the Prophet *Isaiah* foresaw chap. 26. unto which the Lord descends out of his Place, that is, from his former and proper Place; for the Father attends Christ to this his Throne, therefore it is said of the Faithful, *Him will I confess before my Father and his Angels.* In this day when Christ is on his Throne the Prophecy of *Zachary* shall be fulfilled, *Zech. 9. 14. In that day the Lord shall be seen above, or over them.* The first of these Thrones is invisible; *1 Tim. 6. 16. — dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see.* The second is the Throne unto which the Man-child is caught, *Rev. 12.* We read of a third Throne pitcht in *Jerusalem* answering to the Throne of *David* in *Zion*, as is plain *2 Sam. 5. 7.* with *1 Chron. 11. 5. & Psal. 2.* a Prophecy of Christ; *Yet have I set my King upon my Holy-Hill of Zion,* literally understood, and must make good God's Promise unto him, repeated *Luke 1. 32. The Lord God shall give unto Him the Throne of his Father David,* which was prophesied *Isa. 24. 23. He shall reign in Jerusalem in Mount-Zion.* This removing-place by Christ to the second of these Thrones, will be a heart-amazing sight; see *Mat. 24. 30.* it shall make all the Kindreds of the Earth mourn, *Rev. 1. 7.* The first of these Thrones is *JEHOVAH's* alone; the second is the Father's and Christ's together; the third shall be Christ's alone, when all Judgment is committed to the Son; and on this third Throne the Saints shall also sit judging the World, *1 Cor. 6.*

Now the great Question will be which of these three

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Now the great Question will be which of these three

three Thrones is intended in our Text? Herein I do only humbly offer my thoughts with submission, not to impose upon any; I am inclined to believe that the second Throne in the lower Heavens must be intended here, and I offer my Reasons that do induce me so to think:

1. Because this is the Throne about which the innumerable multitudes of Angels do attend, according to our Text, as is plain, *Rev. 5. 11.* as also chap. 7. 11. all the Angels stand about this Throne.

2. Because this Throne in our Text is the Throne before which the Saints and Faithful must be judged; and therefore not that Throne on which they shall sit with Christ to judge the World; for that Christ must reside some considerable time on this Throne, is plain from the work done whilst he is there; namely, first, the Battel fought there between Michael and his Angels, and the Dragon and his, which we read of, *Rev. 12. 7.* 2dly, Whilst there raising the dead Saints. 3dly, Converting the Jews, which will not be done till Christ is seen there; at Christ's sitting there on this Throne Satan is cast down, being dispossessed then of his Principalities, who before was Prince of the Air. 4thly, Christ's Appearance and Christ's Throne are contemporary, they are at the same time, the Scripture makes no difference in them, as St. Paul takes for granted *2 Tim. 4. 1.* *Now this we know that his Appearance is in the Clouds first;* no sooner doth Christ appear, but he is on his Throne; so it is in our Text, *Then shall he sit on the Throne of his Glory.*

But I shall wind up all with one word of Use and Comfort to the Righteous: Oh admire the unspeakable blessed state of those who shall stand blameless before this Throne of his Glory; there will be

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be some preserved without fault before this Throne, Jude 24. Rev. 14. 5. of which sort are all the wise Virgins, v. 4. they are *Virgins*; v. 5. and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the Throne of God.

We now proceed to ver. 32, 33. *And before Him shall be gathered all Nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats: and He shall set the Sheep on his right hand; but the Goats on the left.*

In these two verses we have two of those four heads propounded to be spoken unto in order to the close of this Parable;

First, The great Convention or gathering together that shall be at this his Appearance, and the one set out by a Figure, *All Nations*.

Secondly, The strict and exact Segregation or Division that Christ will make between them; He will divide the Sheep from the Goats.

Now in handling these two Uses my principal work will lie in Explication and Application. In my Explication I shall enquire into these six Particulars.

1. Who is the Judge on this Throne; because it is said here, *before Him*.

2. Who are here to be understood by *all Nations*.

3. Whereunto shall this Gathering be?

4. What is to be understood by this Separation, or Division?

5. Why Sheep and Goats?

6. What may here be understood by right and left-hand?

1. The

1. The Judge here will readily be granted to be the Son of Man and Son of God, *Jesus Christ* alone we read of none but Him in this Judgment; our Context doth clearly grant it, and the Apostle seems to understand it *Rom. 14. 10. We must all stand before the Judgement-Seat of Christ.* *2 Tim. 4. He shall judge the quick and the dead at his Appearing.* Christ is the alone Judge on this Throne unto whom Judgment is committed, of whom *John* speaks *Rev. 4. 8. who was, is, and is to come*, which doth relate to *Jesus Christ*.

But the chief circumstance to be enquired into, is, Who are these *All Nations*? From these words most have gathered, that the latter end of this Chapter speaks of the General Judgment, and they so take it, because till of late few understood the order of the Resurrection, but thought that all, good and bad, Saints (so professing) and Sinners shall rise at one and the same time, not minding what *St. Paul* speaks *1 Cor. 15. 23.* or what *St. John* says *Rev. 20.* But to the words, *the Worlds* (*παντα το εθν*, *Omnes Gentes*) here translated *All Nations*, bear a threefold acceptance; 1. Sometimes Gentiles, or Greeks, in opposition to Jews. 2. Sometimes the same word, or the word which hath affinity with it in the Hebrew, is *People*, as *Psal. 47. last, Isa. 43. 21. This People have I formed for my self, or Nation*, as here. 3. Sometimes this word is translated *Family*, *Luke 7. 5. he loved our Family*: so that it may be read, *All Nations, All People, All Families*, all compact People, such united under Christ.

All Nations cannot be understood in many places of all the World in a strict sense; as for instance, *Deut. 29. 24.* it is there said, *All Nations shall say, what meaneth the heat of this anger?* whereas it cannot

not mean universally, 1 Chron. 14. last, God brought the fear of David upon all Nations. Psal. 118. All Nations assembled against David. Hag. 2. Christ is called the Desire of all Nations; yet when he cometh the Nations are angry, Rev. 11. and his coming doth not answer their desires: Therefore the Assembly doth read this Hag. 2. *The Desire of all Nations, the Faithful in all Nations*; though there, as here, it is read *all Nations*. So it is said, Dan. 7. *All Nations shall serve him*, yet God provides punishment for those that will not serve Christ, see Isa. 60. So Christ tells his Disciples, they shall be hated of all Nations for his Name sake, Mar. 24. These cannot be taken in a strict sense: but Rev. 21. 24. of the Nations of them that are saved: this bears the name of Nations distinct. From all these instances I argue, That because we have read *all Nations*, it doth not necessitate us to believe that all the World must be meant by it in a strict sense: for in all the forenamed places it cannot mean all the World, every one will easily grant and acknowledge, and that all the World and every individual person cannot be intended in our Text.

I urge in the third place this; That at no one time shall there be such a gathering to Christ to Judgment; for we read in Scripture of two general Judgments:

First, Those that are Christ's at his coming, 1 Cor. 15. 23. And all that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him, 1 Thess. 4. *And the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished*, Rev. 20. Neither doth this in our Text agree with the last general Judgment, for these Reasons: 1. There shall be no Sheep judged in that Judgment; The Saints sit with him in Judgment, 1 Cor. 6. *Know ye*

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not that the Saints shall judge the World? 2. Not the last and general Judgement, because here the Angels are Christ's attendants at this Throne and Judgment; whereas in the last they shall not be concerned: for the World to come is not put into subjection to Angels. Therefore whereas it is said in our Text, that Christ comes with all his Angels; to the last Judgment He shall come with all his Saints, *Zee Jude 14, 15.* when he comes to execute Judgment on the Wicked, *Jude* saith, he comes with *thousands of his Saints*; neither can they be Saints in a strict sense taken, till themselves have past the tryal before his Bar, they meet him in the Air in his first Judgment, they come along with him in the second. 3. Not the last Judgment in our Text, because in the last Judgment Men shall be cast for not believing in the Son of God *Jesus Christ*; but in this Judgment they shall be cast and condemned for being unfruitful in works of obedience under Christ.

Besides all these Reasons, this in the latter end of this 25th of *Matthew* is not meant of the general Judgment of the whole World, I will superadd the Judgment of Men both Ancient and Modern; *Gregory Nazienzen* saith to this place, *These spoken of here are wicked Believers, not Rebels; not Foreigners, but offending Citizens.* By Goats (the Colledge of *Rhemes* on this place) separated (say they) because till then they lived together in the Church; Hereticks (say they) went out before and so not to be separated here. The Assembly of Divines (so called) on these Verses, 32, 33. Separated as Chaff from Wheat, as those *Mat. 3.* as those in the Net, *Mat. 13.* the Flock of Christ, his Church in this life, are like the Flock at *Padan-aram* speckled and spotted (*Gen. 30. 35.*) in one Flock; so saith the Assembly on this place, which seems

seems to illustrate the matter before us. *Erasmus* saith, here, *By all Nations must be understood all ranks and sorts of Men in all Nations; consequently not all Nations in a strict sense.* Ainsworth upon *Cant. 1. 8.* feed by Kids, or young Goats, saith *The Flock in Scripture usually is comprehensive of Sheep and Goats; Christ himself was typed out by Goats and Kids, Lev. 16. Heb. 9. the blood of Goats typed out the blood of Christ.*

Now these Opinions of Men may help to clear me from Novelty or Singularity in my Notion on this Text, That those that shall be gathered before this Throne are such as have profest Christ separated from the World, as is plain in the former two Parables, the foolish Virgins and Servants who are Christ's own Servants: So here by Sheep and Goats are intended the Flock of Christ gathered out of all Nations, among which are bad as well as good, caught in the Net, *Mat. 13.*

I now proceed to the third Question propounded to be spoke unto by way of Explication, which was this *Whither shall this gathering be?*

Ans. first in general, to Christ; *where the Carcass is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together,* *Luke 17. 37.*

2dly, in particular; Their gathering shall be into the lower Heavens, when his Throne shall there be set, called *Clouds and Air*, *1 Thess. 4. caught up to meet the Lord in the Air*, whither we read the Man-child is caught, *Rev. 12.* The general Rendezvouz is in Heaven, there this Throne is set, *Rev. 4. Dan. 7.* therefore we read of numberless numbers before that Throne, *Rev. 7.* We read of those that dwell in Heaven, *chap. 13.* We read of some cleared before this Throne, *ch. 19.* and upon white Horses coming with

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with Christ when he comes; which they could not be, had they not been acquitted at this first Throne of Judgment.

The fourth Question by way of Explication, is *What is to be understood by this segregating or dividing?*

Ans. The word *segrego* signifies to disjoyn, to take out of a Flock, to disfranchise out of a Freedom or Corporation, to excommunicate; so *Pasor* reads it: To segregate must be to disjoyn those that before were aggregated or closely incorporated; therefore Sheep and Goats here cannot be understood Church and World. The Church and World were segregated before, according to the Apostle's direction *2 Cor. 6. Be ye separated or disjoyned.* These here spoken of are in a Net together, in a Kingdom together; therefore he says, *He will gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, Mat. 13. 41, 49. The Angels (who then come with Christ) shall sever the Wicked from among the Just.* These are both together in the Wedding-chamber, *Mat. 22.* till Christ comes to sever them. The Sheep and Goats of old in a literal sense were together in one Flock under *Jacob*, *Gen. 30.* So also *Ezek. 34.* So in *Job's* Flock, *Job 1.* in his seven thousand Sheep the Goats are comprehended. All which Instances do serve to strengthen the Conjecture, that this Judgment in our Text is not to be understood of the last and general Judgment, but such as have been drawn in to profess Christ.

5th Quest. *Why doth Christ stile them Sheep and Goats, seeing they are all Christians in profession?*

I *answ.* first, Because Goats were always reckoned clean beasts, fit for Sacrifice under the Law as well as Sheep; therefore these bad Professors may be called Goats, comparatively clean. Christ doth not set them forth

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forth by Dogs, Bears, or Lions, but Goats.

2dly, *Sheep* and *Goats*, to set out the difference in nature that was between them, though both in the Flock or Church. A Sheep is of one nature, and a Goat of another. These Professors differ much in their natures, as a Goat from a Sheep.

3dly, Goats are taken in here as well as Sheep, to shew the particular charge that Christ hath of them both, the Goats as well as the Sheep, as plainly appears *Ezek. 34*.

4thly, *Goats* and *Sheep*, because though they were both in one Flock, yet the Goats were the worst in nature. There is much difference as to the worthiness of Sheep and Goats in nature; the Goats are not so profitable as the Sheep: therefore although the Goats are clean creatures, yet the Sheep were esteemed as the best, and commonly in Scripture named first. So much for the fifth Question by way of Explication.

The sixth Circumstance to be explained is, *What may be here understood by right and left hand?*

Ans. 1. Right and left hand is sometimes taken properly, sometimes improperly and figuratively, in Scriptures: when it is taken improperly and significantly, it implies great Power, or a powerful hand; So *Exod. 15. The Right hand of the Lord.* So *Psal. 108. & Psal. 138. Let thy Right hand save me*; that is, thy strong hand.

2dly; Sometimes significantly, a place of pleasure and delight is understood God's right hand, *Psal. 16.* Sometimes the right and left hand of Christ are properly to be understood; as in that request of the Mother of *Zebedee's Sons, Mat. 20. 20, 21. Grant*

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that these my two Sons may sit one on the right hand, and the other on the left in thy Kingdom. Where we may understand both places to be places of Honour, but most commonly the right hand is understood the place of highest Honour; So *Jacob* understood it in his blessing *Joseph's* Sons. But by right and left-hand in our Text, it may be understood properly; as Christ is personally considered as Son of Man in this his day, so He hath right and left hand: And as we do properly give the right or upper hand to those whom we bear esteem unto, so here it is to be understood, a place of high esteem; and under that consideration Christ is said to be set at God's right hand, that is, the place of high esteem: but I need not dwell upon this, I shall only add a few words of Application to the whole, and so proceed.

Use 1. This doth inform us where Christ when he is in his Glory on his Throne, attended with his Angels, will begin, namely at his own House, his own Servants, his own Flock; and thereto the words of *S. Peter* may properly be applied (though there is more in it) *1 Pet. 4 17. Judgment begins at the House of God.*

2. We have in this Relation a view of Christ's Glory in his second Coming; by his great and glorious Attendance, by the vast gathering that shall be unto Him in that day; for I judge they are therefore called by a Figure, *All Nations*, though properly not so (as you have heard) because of the vast numbers that shall be of them; there shall be innumerable Multitudes of all Nations, Tongues and Kings, eminently set forth, *Rev. 7. All Nations*, to shew the Universal Power that Christ shall have in that day over all Nations, no Nation but what must be

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accountable unto Him. See what Glory is ascribed unto this Lamb, *Jesus Christ*, all Crowns are cast down before Him, *Rev. 4. 10. & 5. 8.*

3. This informs us of that perfect knowledge that Christ shall have of all Persons in that day, that He can divide before He try; He knows who are worthy of the right hand, and who deserve the left at first sight.

4. We are by this Relation (if so to be understood, as I think it is plain, that this is Christ's Flock not the general Judgment) informed, what little cause Professors and bad Church-members have to bear upon and rest in their meer Profession, if some may be Goats, and consequently condemned to eternal torment. Consider, it will be an unspeakable favour and privilege for Church-members to stand in that day; as Christ hints when he speaks to his Disciples, *Luk. 21. 36.* when the greatest Men on Earth shall call to the Rocks to hide them from His Face, *Rev. 6. 16.*

5. In the last place, I would speak one word more by way of Counsel to Church-members; Enquire into the sincerity of your Hearts, as well as the truth of your Principles: Here is no fault found in their general Faith nor Principles, the fault lay in the Root, it lay in the Nature of them they had not a changed Nature, though in the Flock: What a weak Argument is it then for Church-members to plead [*I thank God I am as true to my Principles as ever, and do believe whatever I did*] whilst they want love to Christ in his Members, zeal in his Service, and fruitfulness in their Places; do but always remember there are Goats as well as Sheep in Christ's Flock when he comes to inspect them,

We now proceed to Verſ. 34. *Then ſhall the King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World.*

We now proceed to handle the laſt Head of the four propounded to be handled, in order to the taking up the matter contained in the latter part of this Chapter, which is the final and irrevocable Sentence paſt by Chriſt upon theſe two Parties ſo ſegregated, or divided to the right and left hand; which proceeding of our Lord with both Parties he ſeems to follow, in the ſame method: As,

Fiſt, To denounce His Definitive Sentence;

2dly, Render the Ground and Reason why he doth ſo;

3dly, Receive their Rep'y thereunto.

4thly, Take it off, by ſhewing them their miſtake.

1. I take notice of Chriſt's Order; with whom he begins, namely with them on the right hand, with his Sheep or the Righteous, ſo ſtiled in this Context: now the whole paſſage and paragraph relating to the Righteous we have from ver. 34, to the end of v. 40. which whole paſſage or paragraph iſſues in theſe four Heads:

1. Chriſt's final Sentence to Glory, v. 34.
2. We have the ground and reason rendred, v. 35, 36.
3. We have the Reply of the Righteous, v. 37, 38, 39.
4. We have our Lord taking off this Reply, ſhewing them the truth of what he had ſaid. Of theſe in order.

1. We

1. We have considerable Christ's gracious Sentence and Invitation to Glory, in these words, *Come ye* ; In which passage we have these five Circumstances considerable. 1. The present capacity that then our Lord shall be in ; *A King*, or *the King*, twice exprest in the Context. We have our Lord Christ under a fourfold capacity set forth in this Chapter : 1. A Bridegroom ; 2. A Nobleman travelling ; 3. A Lord coming, v. 19. 4. A King judging and ruling. The fourth of which we are now upon.

2. We have in this verse the sweet amicable Epithet or Salutation used by Christ to them (*ye blessed of my Father*) commonly in Scriptures a manifestation of gracious respect, as I shall shew you.

3. We have Christ's Gift or Bequeathment from this dear love and respect, and that is the Kingdom; Which Kingdom we have,

4. Set out, 1. By the right and propriety of it, it is implicitly *an Inheritance*, 2. *Prepared for them* ; 3. As to the Antiquity and Eternity of it, *before the foundation of the World*. These are the particular Circumstances in our Text, of which I shall very briefly speak, 1. By way of Explication, 2. Observation, 3. Application.

1st. By way of Explication.

1. What is this *Kingdom*?

2. What may we understand by this appellation, *blessed of my Father* ?

3. How may it be said to be *prepared* ?

4. *How from the foundation of the World* ?

5. What said here *inherit* ?

1. By this Kingdom, I understand the Kingdom under the whole Heavens, prophesied clearly by *Daniel*

niel chap. 7. and it is on the Earth, Rev. 5. 10. over the Nations, Rev. 2. 27. three times exprest, Dan. 7. 18, 22, 27. and it plainly appears to be the same that *Nebuchadnezzar* had before, by the context there.

2. Why called *blessed of my Father*? This is a Salutation shewing very high esteem to them, and so it is used in Scripture from men; see Gen. 24. 31. from *Laban* to *Abrabams* Servant, *Come in thou blessed of Jehovah*; an honourable title; as *Ainsworth* is th on the place. To that end is it used by *Abimelech* to *Isaac*, Gen. 26. 29. *Thou art now the blessed of Jehovah*. It is used also by *Naomi* to her Daughter, *Ruth* 3. 10. *Blessed art thou of the Lord that hath shewed thee kindness*. From *Saul* to *Samuel*, 1 Sam. 15 13. *thou blessed of the Lord*. It was used to exprest very great respect: And it is understood that there is three circumstances contained in this Salutation;

1. A very amicable loving sweet Countenance; so *Erasmus*, paraphrasing on this verse and saluting, saith, *He to the sort on the right hand, with a mild and merry cheer, shall say, Come my Friends, whom the World counted vile and execrable, but my Father counts honourable and praise-worthy*. So he.

2. This Salutation was spoken with much reverence and honour to them unto whom it was spoken, it was with bowing and worship to those unto whom they spake.

3. This respect was given as they having received it first from God; as if Christ should say, I esteem and honour you because my Father honoureth you; you are not only blest by me in this capacity, but my Father hath determined this Blessing to rest upon you.

But 3dly, *Why is this Kingdom said to be prepared?*

I answ.

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I answ. To prepare supposeth these three things. 1st, To work or make a thing is to prepare. 2dly, To establish, confirm or appoint: So God's Throne is said to be prepared of old, *Psal. 9. 7.* so understood, *R m. 9. 23.* there he speaks of persons prepared unto Glory, or pre-appointed. 3dly, To prepare, is to make every way fit and ready for the end.

But 4thly, *Why are they invited to inherit?*

Answ. To inherit supposeth an Inheritance purchased by their Ancestors, as Children inherit after their Fathers what was theirs, and that of right. The Estate which a Father leaves to be divided to his Children doth properly bear the name of an Inheritance, *Prov. 13. 22. A good man leaves an Inheritance to his Children.* *Prov. 19. 14. Houses and Riches are the Inheritance of Fathers:* Therefore, *Luke 12.* the man speaks to Christ to divide the Inheritance.

2dly, It is called an *Inheritance*, because it is long and worthy; it is not a small inconsiderable Legacy that is stiled an *Inheritance*, but a considerable Estate. Therefore *David* stiles God's Word by this name, *his Inheritance*, *Psal. 119.*

3dly, Called an *Inheritance*, because it was yours before you were born.

But fifthly, *Why added here, before the foundation of the World?*

I answ. 1. To set out the Antiquity of God's design of good to your souls that shall be found in Christ. This was one of the most early Contrivances of God; the Salvation and Glorification of Sinners was one of the great Concernments upon God's heart in the very beginning: *2 Tim. 1. 9. Who hath saved*

us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began. *Eph. 1. 4.* According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the World, that we should be holy and without blame before him.

2. To shew the certainty of this Inheritance, therefore is Antiquity affixed unto the Promise of Christ to come, His Death, the Kingdom of Christ, to set out the certainty of this Inheritance.

Having thus explicated the words, I now proceed to observe ten Parts from them.

Part 1.

That Jesus Christ the Son of God and Son of man, in his distributions of Favours and Severities in his second Coming unto his own Servants, is a King.

Part 2.

God the Father is the principal Agent in Glorification of the Righteous.

Part 3.

That Jesus Christ in handing out Glory to the Righteous, doth it with apparent manifestation of dear affection, and choice esteem, whilst he calls them, Blessed of his Father.

Part 4.

From this word of invitation (Come) Jesus Christ loves and desires close communion with the Righteous in that day of his Royal Glory; when he bids others Depart with detestation, he saith unto the Righteous, Come ye.

Part 5.

That the future reward of the Righteous is not their own purchase, but their Fathers, is descends to them as an Inheritance.

Part 6.

The proper reward of the Righteous when Christ comes, is a Crown and Kingdom.

Part 7.

The Righteous receive their Commission for taking and possessing the Kingdom from the immediate Mouth and Throne of Christ at his second Coming.

Part 8.

The reward of the Saints is a prepared and made-ready Glory ; they shall not stay for it.

Part 9.

This Kingdom, Rule and Glory was prepared properly, directly, and particularly for the Righteous, and none else.

Part 10.

Preparation of Glory for Saints was one of the first, great and chief Concerns of Almighty God before the World was made.

Now all these Parts are very worthy to be largely treated on, but it will not suit with the title of the Book so to proceed : therefore I shall touch them very briefly.

1. That Christ in this his Day is a King, will be easily granted, the Prophecies are full to that purpose, Psal. 2. *My King* , Psal. 21. Psal. 24. *Isa.* 32. 12. *Zech.* 9. chap. 14. 9. *Matth.* 22. *the King came in to see the guests.* And this is considerable, that Christ is not then an ordinary King, but a Monarchical King over all the Earth ; *Zech.* 14. 5. *He shall reign from Sea to Sea, from the River to the end of the Earth ;* Prophecy and Promise, *Isa.* 53. 12. *Greatest strength, Rev.* 17. chap. 19. *King of Kings and Lord of Lords ; not only King of Saints, but King of Nations.* There are two things considerable

ble in this Royalty of Christ ; 1. His Immense Power ; 2. His transcendent Glory. 1. His Immense Power, as you have it before ; He is a Monarchical King, having all Power in Heaven and Earth given him by his Father at his Resurrection and now actually received into Possession in this season, Power over Devils, over Men ; all must bow to him in Heaven and in Earth. 2dly, in this season Christ shall have transcendent Glory : Solomon in his Glory was but a weak Type of Christs Glory therefore it is prophesied, *Isa. 33. the Righteous shall see the King in his Glory*, *Plal. 24.*

I shall speak a word or two by way of Application to this Part, and first to them on the right hand, the Flock of Christ, by way of Admiration. Will not this be a choice and unspeakable Priviledge to a poor soul to enjoy a smile, an amicable loving Countenance and Respect, full Satisfaction from Him, when He is in this Immense Power and transcendent Glory : what think you of it ?

But, 2dly ; a word to those on the left hand. Oh the Dread, the Terror that will be in a frown, in a sharp rebuke, with ire and wrath in the face from Christ in that day ! it struck the man dumb the first word, *Mar. 22.* Consider of that also.

3dly ; These things being so ; is it not all our concerns to make peace with him in time whilst he is a Lamb, before this day come ? *Kiss the Son.* I must but touch them.

Part 2.

That God the Father is the great Agent in Mans Salvation. These are the blessed of the Father unto whom Christ here speaks ; Christ doth but confirm what was done before by the Father, unto whom he

here speaks. That the Father is the great Agent, and first mover in mans eternal Salvation, is plain ; if we observe these eight circumstances,

1. He promiseth Christ to come, and that freely, *Gen. 3.* as we find in the Prophets all along.
2. He gives and sends Christ, *John 3. 17.* *He so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son. Gal. 4. God sent his Son.*
3. The Father invites and draws to Christ, *John 6. 44.* *None come to him, except the Father draw him.*
4. The Father sends the Spirit, *Act. 1.* it is the promise of the Father ; as also *Job. 14. 26.* the Comforter whom the Father will send.
5. The Father converts and begets, *Ephes. 1.*
6. The Father makes fit and prepares for Glory, makes meet for the Inheritance, *Ephes. 1. 12. 13.*
7. He is said to save us ; mans Salvation is attributed to him, *Tit. 3. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 9. who hath saved us.*
8. The Father gives the Kingdom, even this reward in the Text, according to *Luke 12. 32.* *Fear not, little Flock, it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* And all this God doth from the root of tender love dwelling in him : therefore, saith Christ, *John 16. 27.* *For the Father himself loveth you.*

Use 1. O then, what an unspeakable, unimaginable Love doth appear from God to man by these Considerations, and the time of it doth much aggravate it, according to *Rom. 5.* *When we were enemies.* It might well be said of *John*, that *God is Love.*

2. If this be so, then men are taught unto whom to attribute their Salvation, not to themselves. We say with *Paul* *Eph. 2. 8, 9.* *We are saved by Grace, by the gift of God, not of Works.* The Scriptures are full

full to this purpose ; see unto whom the Apostle attributes his Salvation, Eph. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father who hath blessed us.* So Col. 1. 3. *We give thanks to the God and Father of Jesus Christ for the hope of Glory.* 2 Thel. 2. 13. We are bound to bless God who hath from the beginning chosen you 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us.*

Part 3.

That Christ in his Appellations and Congratulations to the Righteous doth manifest much sweetness and fulness of affection ; Christ crowns his Saints with alacrity and cheerfulness, as we have heard in the explication. The Antients are of opinion that when the Salutation was given by *Laban to Isaac's* Servant, and from *Abimelech to Isaac* and in such cases, it was exprest with much alacrity, and smiling, loving appearance ; And that our Lord doth manifest in these words much affection we need not question, who went so readily and freely to die for them, and whose love conveyed him forth with such strong desires to sup with them before he went, John 13. 1. *Having loved his own ; he loved them unto death,* Luk. 22. 15. with desire. The consideration of this his love manifested in his going away may easily satisfie us, that in this his coming again there will be an amicable joyful meeting : therefore this coming of his is set out by a Marriage in this Chapter, which is a loving and joyful meeting. We have a precious Prophecie relating to this day, Heb. 3. 17. *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy ; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.* The like

like Propheſie we have, *Eſa. 53. 11. He ſhall ſee the
revel of his ſoul, and ſhall be ſatisfied ; or, as the
words may be read, Joyfully reſreſt.* So the word
uſed, *Job. 38. 27* as rain reſreſh the Earth, making
all look merrily. And this appearance of Chriſt doth
well ſuit with what Chriſt promiſes, *Luk. 12. 37.*
He will come forth and ſerve them, as Bridegrooms
uſed to do in ſome Countries. Chriſt is the Patron
of the Saints Crown, and doth it Joyfully. The rea-
ſon why Chriſt doth ſo joyfully crown his righte-
ous Servants, is,

1ſt. The ſweetneſs and goodneſs of his Nature,
who though they receive all from him, yet loves them
for his own Graces.

2dly ; From that ſympathy that is between Chriſt
and thoſe that are righteous, *Pſal. 11. the Righteous
Lord loveth Righteouſneſs.* This conſideration may
inform us of that unſpeakable difference which ſhall
be in this day between the face of Chriſt towards
the wicked and the righteous : he ſpeaks to the one
in his wrath, *Pſal. 2.* and to the other in his loving-
kindneſs. Oh the face of Chriſt will be ſet againſt
the wicked, he will in that day deſpiſe their image,
Pſal. 73. 20.

3dly ; This ſhould provoke the Righteous to do
what they do in obedience to Chriſt with joy and
gladneſs, in conſideration how gladly he ſhall reward
them. This *Paul* exhorts the *Corinthians* unto, as
to *Almes*, *2 Cor. 9. 7. not grudgingly, for God loves
a cheereful giver, becauſe he is to himſelf ; it is but
our reaſonable ſervice, Rom. 12. 12.*

Part 4.

*That Chriſt loves and deſires cloſe Communion
with his Righteous in that day, as appears by this invi-
tation,*

Come : he is not content to let them remain at a distance : for we must understand this is opposed to what he saith to the other, *Depart* : here it is *Come* or draw near. This *Come* is used as a loving invitation ; so it was used by *Jehu* to *Jehonadab*, 2 Kings 11. 15, 16. *Come along* : often so used in the Book of *Canticles*, ch. 4. 8. *Come with me*. So ch. 5. 1, 2. *Prov.* 9. 5. *Come, eat*. And according to this invitation it shall be, 1 Thes. 4. *they shall be ever with the Lord*.

See again the unspeakable difference in God's proceedings with these two sorts of Persons ; *Come, Depart*. The Spouse of Christ can say, as it is *Cant.* 7. 10. *I am my Beloved's, and his desire is towards me, or his face*. The Saints is comely, the others is deformed.

But a poor soul may say, *How may I now know that I shall then be invited into this Communion ?*

I answ. Thou mayest in a great measure know it at present. How stands thy desires as to Communion with Christ at present ? the true Spouse of Christ desires the kisses of his mouth at present, besides his Letters at a distance. Canst thou say, My Beloved is mine, and my desire is towards him ?

Part 5.

That the reward of the Saints is an Inheritance, not their own purchase. This is implied in that they are bid to inherit. In opening the words I shewed you, that by an Inheritance is commonly understood a Patrimony, or an Estate descending from Fathers to Children. The Learned tell us, that there is a critical difference between a Portion & an Inheritance, a Portion consisting of Goods and Chattels, but an Inheritance is properly of Lands. Now a man may

come

come to possess an Inheritance two wayes : 1st, as it doth descend to him lineally as the rightful Heir : 2dly, by free-gift, as having it freely given, or being adopted unto it, made an Heir, as many are in a proper sense. In this latter sense it doth very well agree to, and set forth the state of the Saints : for they are freely made Sons and Heirs, *John 1. 12. He gave priviledge to be called the Sons of God.* And so *Rom. 8. 17.* And it is considerable that there was a time when we had no right to this Inheritance, according to that, *1 Cor. 6. 9. The unrighteous shall not inherit :* and in such a capacity were you, *Eph. 2. 12. strangers from the Covenants and Promises.* And that this Reward of the Saints is called an Inheritance, is plain from these Scriptures, *Eph. 1. 1 Cor. 3. 24. Heb. 9. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 4.* These Considerations may inform us, if the Reward is by Inheritance, there is then these four Circumstances considerable in it ;

1. It is large ; every small Legacy or Gift is not an Inheritance.

2. It comes freely ; an Inheritance is free : not the product of thy labour and pains, it was the purchase of thy Ancestors ; therefore it is called *the purchased Possession*, *Eph. 1.*

3. If an Inheritance, then not subject to imbezilement, it lies sure ; not like Goods and Chattels ; a man will strain hard before he will sell the Inheritance of his Fathers.

4. If it be an Inheritance, it is an honourable Portion ; a person that hath an Inheritance is esteemed above one that hath no Inheritance. If thou art an Heir to this Inheritance, live like an Heir. All God's Children are Heirs. Live like an Heir to such an Inheritance,

heritance, and have a special care of those sins that will disinherit thee. There are ten sins laid down 1 Cor. 6. 9. that every one of them will disinherit thee, as these: *Fornication, Idolatry, Adultery, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, Theft, Covetousness, Drunkenness, Revelling, Extortion,* and of these lived in, will disinherit thee or any person.

Part 6.

The particular Reward of the Righteous from Christ is a Crown and Kingdom; Inherit the Kingdom, inherit the Kingdom, possess the Kingdom. In handling this part I shall speak a very brief word to these four Heads.

1. Prove the Part.
2. Explain more particularly what this Kingdom is.
3. Where it is.
4. When it takes place.
5. A brief word of Use.

1. For proof hereof; this was prophesied of from the beginning of the World. *Numb. 23. 24. Balaam* prophesied of it; so doth *David*, and the Prophet *Daniel*: But I have touched this in the Explication, only I will mind some places in the New-Testament, *Jam. 1. 12. Those that endure Temptations, shall have a Crown of Life.* So chap. 2. 5. *The Kingdom that God hath prepared for them that love him.* This is the Reward that is promised to the Elders that are faithful, *1 Pet. 5. 2 Tim. 4. 8. called a Kingdom, 2 Thes. 1. 5. that you may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom.* *Luke 12. 32. Heb. 12. We, saith the Apostle, receive a Kingdom that cannot be moved, Luk. 22. 30.* This is a Truth that the Scriptures do abundantly make manifest.

2. *What a Kingdom is this?*

I Answer; When Kingdom in Scripture is spoken as it is taken for Rule and Dominion or Sovereignty. Thus it must be understood of *Saul*, 1 Sam. 14. 47. of whom it is said *He took the Kingdom*, that is, he entred into the Rule. So understood also, 1 Sam. 18. and what can he have more but the Kingdom? This was prophesie, 1, Psa. 49. *The Just shall have dominion.* So Psa. 22. And this is plain in that Parallel-place, with this, *Luke 19.* from Christ's mouth, *Be thou Ruler over five (or ten) Cities.* So that here when Christ saith, *inherit the Kingdom*, he means, take the Rule or Dominion.

3. *Where is this Kingdom?* (This I have spoken unto before, only a few words.)

I answ. This Kingdom shall be on Earth. See one Text more, Psa. 45. 16. Christ's Sons or Children shall be constituted and appointed Princes in all the Earth, as *Ainsworth* reads it. Remember I have before given you two Scriptures, which alone are sufficient, *Dan. 7. 27.* *Rev. 5. 10.* one saith, *under the whole Heavens*; the other, *on the Earth.*

4. *When doth this take place, or its beginning?*

I answ. At, and not before Christ's second Appearing. And in managing this, I shall comprehend the seventh Part, which was this, That they shall receive their Commission from Christ's immediate mouth. This Part is exceeding clear, if we will mind our Context, comparing ver. 31. with these verses; When the Son of Man shall come, and all his Angels with Him, then this Kingdom commences and not before; neither can it rationally be expected that they shall receive it before. St. *James* saith, *they are tryed when they are tryed.* And this confirmed, *Dan. 7. 21, 28.* *They have made war with the Saints, and prevailed,*

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until

until the Ancient of Dayes come; and then it is that Judgment is given to the Saints; then from that time the Saints possess the Kingdom. So Psal. 49. *The Just shall have dominion in the morning.* And this is plain from what St. Paul speaks, Col. 3. 4. *When Christ who is our life shall appear.* 2 Thess. 1. 7. The Saints were to have Rest when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels. As also our Text is plain. And it cannot be rationally thought that the Saints shall have Kingdom before Christ, they are not to expect it before Him, the Reign of the Saints is contemporary with Christ's; neither can it be supposed that they shall have it before they have past Christ's Bar, and are acquitted by Him. Therefore St. Paul exhorts the Church to *judge nothing before the time, and that is, when Christ shall appear, when every man shall have praise of God.*

This Part doth instruct us in the greatness and compleatness of the Saints Reward. What can be compleater and greater than a Crown and Kingdom? Is it not the ultimate of all aims and endeavours of this World the highest of all Attainments on Earth? is a Kingdom: Therefore this was the saying of Saul concerning David, when the people sung of him in the dances, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,* and saith Saul, *what can he have more but the Kingdom?* Be therefore affected with the greatness of this Reward. This Consideration might serve to satisfie a righteous Person in the lowest condition they can be brought into in this world, the contemplation of this Glory; this is the root of the twenty four Elders Song, Rev. 5. *Thou hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the Earth;* and you that are interessed in it, upon good grounds long for it; it is not unwarrantable,

it is but like Christ, who sits at God's right hand, expecting, looking, waiting, till he make his foes his footstool. And labour to walk worthy of this Kingdom and Glory, which that ye may do, observe these rules.

1. Labour to be loose from this present World. This is the proper use that Christ makes of the same premises, *Luke. 12. 32, 33. Sell what you have, give alms.*

2. Rejoice in hope of this glory, *Rom. 5. Rom. 12.*

3. Do not make haste unwarrantably towards this Kingdom.

4. Do not envy at the prosperity of the wicked; thou hast no cause to envy at their state. See how pertinently *David* doth urge this, *Psal. 37.* throughout.

Part. 8.

That the Reward of the Saints is a prepared, made ready Glory; the Kingdom is prepared. In handling this Part I shall, 1. shew how the Scriptures elsewhere speak in this language; 2. what is intended in this kind of speaking, and so make the application. Briefly, That the glory of the Saints is prepared; see *Esa. 64. 4. Men have not seen, nor heard what God hath prepared for them that wait for him:* which *St. Paul* recites, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* only differs the word wait into love him. We have *David* speaking in this language, *Psal. 31. 19,* That this Kingdom is prepared for some our Lord seems to grant in his reply to the mother of *Zebedees* Sons, *Matth. 20. 11. It shall be given,* saith he, *to them for whom it is prepared.*

But what is Comprehended in this saying prepared?

I answer first, it sets forth the certainty of it. Because

cause to be prepared, ordained, and established, is the same in Scriptures *Isa. 30.* where we have these two made convertible terms, *ordained prepared*, spoken of *Tophet*. And so may that place be understood, as I shewed before *Rom. 9. 23.* this was ordained, established for you.

2. To make ready, or prepare, supposeth a proportioning or making fit or suitable.

3. To make a thing by Skill and Art, as *Noah's Ark* is said to be prepared, that is, by pains and art *Heb. 11. be prepared an Ark*, or framed an Ark. So God framed this Kingdom.

4. To *prepare* is to beautifie and adorn: and thus the new *Jerusalem* is said to be *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*, *Rev. 21.* Take only this word by the way; Consider your inheritance is ready for you, do you labour to be ready for that: it is made ready for thee in particular, and none else, the Righteous only with Christ, exclusive of all others, it was prepared for them that are righteous only. And this was shadowed out in the choice qualifications of those first to be Rulers, *Exod. 18.* the counsel of *Jehoiada* to *Moses*. They must be *men fearing God and hating Covetousness.* *2 Sam. 23. 3. They that rule over men, must be Just, must be Righteous:* and it was more eminently held forth in those Judges set up by God in the second age of the world, when God himself is said to be their King, *1 Sam. 12. 12.* but as a Just punishment of their Sin God suffered them to go out of this path. But all the while that the unrighteous Rule, *David* tells us that *the Foundation of the earth are out of course*, *Psal. 75. Psal. 82.* which are plain to this. But how will it be when it is in course? *Daniel* tells us, *chap. 7. 18, 22, 27.* four times expressed, the *Rule and Dominion* shall be in the *Saints*, not

not Saints in their own or other mens thoughts, but Saints and righteous, so reckoned and allowed, *possess the Kingdom prepared for you*, saith Christ with an *emphasis*, whom I acquit at my bar for Saints.

By way of Use I only leave this one word of Information, We may from hence be satisfied of the infallible certainty of the righteous inheriting, it is prepared, ordained, and appointed for thee; and all the Devils in hell cannot turn it aside. This the prophet *Isaiah* foresaw, *Chap. 24*, he heard songs from the utmost parts of the earth, *glory to the righteous, the House of the righteous shall be exalted*, *Plal. 75*. last.

Part. 10.

The 10th and last Part respects the antiquity of this Provision, it was provided for the Righteous before the Foundations of the World: the Part was this. That the reward of the righteous was one of these first and most weighty concerns that was upon the heart of God before the world was made. There are no things said to take their beginnings from hence but great and weighty things; things ordained, appointed, effected before the Foundation of the world are things of weight. God the Father loved Christ before the Foundation of the World, *Job. 17*. the Saints are chosen in Christ before the Foundation of the World. Christ was appointed a Sacrifice for sin, a Lamb slain before the Foundation of the World, *1 Pet. 1. 20*. the Rest and eternal Reward before of the Saints was prepared and finished amongst these weighty Concerns, before, or from the foundation of the world, *Heb. 4. 3*.

One word of Use and so I shall close this verse. From hence we may see and perceive a glimpse of the
(R 3) unspeak-

unspeakable happy state of righteous persons ; they were the Subjects for whom *Jehovah* was at work before the world was : not only wert thou upon Christs heart before thou wast made, but before the World was made. Oh admire the Love to and provision made for thee ! *so much for verse 34,*

We now proceed to Verse 35. to the end of the 40. *for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger and ye took me in : Naked and ye Cloathed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and cloathed thee ? or when saw we thee Sick or in Prison and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

In these six verses we have contained the whole proceeding of our Lord with these sheep. So divided, which for brevity sake I have comprized under Four heads.

1. The Lords gracious Sentence to those separated on the right hand.

Secondly the Reasons (by the King on his Throne) alledged as the ground of this his singular and signal favour towards them, which we have here, *vers. 35. 36.*

3. We have the humble reply made by the Righteous

teous by way of disclamation, not sensible of their worthiness in the least. 37, 38, 39.

4. We have our Lord graciously taking off the Objections urged against themselves; by way of explanation, vers. 40. *inasmuch as ye have done it to these it was done to me.* The first of these I have largely spoke unto already and finished. We now proceed to the Second which is the ground that our Lord is pleased to insist upon, vers. 35. 36. which in general is the kindness shewed to Christ in his brethren: which he branches out into Six circumstances of distress: First, he being in them hungry; Secondly, thirsty; Thirdly, harbourless; Fourthly, naked; Fifthly, sick; Sixty, in prison. In all which several states and conditions he had found these now on his right hand ministering unto him in his brethren.

But because, according to promise, I would proceed with all possible brevity in this latter part of the Chapter, and in the remaining three heads, I shall handle them together which I judge most proper, because they are intermixt one with another (that is) what we have contained from vers. 35. to 40. and there being nothing difficult, or wanting explication, I shall reduce the whole in these Six verses into Six heads.

First; we have a recitation of the former good actions performed by the Righteous, urged here by the King as the grounds (next and immediately to his own Grace) of that signal acceptance and unspeakable favour.

Secondly; We have contained a particular enumeration of those particular actions, so acceptable to and taken notice of by Christ in them; which lyeth here in Six circumstances: all which are very well taken by him.

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Thirdly;

Thirdly, We have Christ taking notice of all these actions of charity done to the least and lowest of his brethren as done to himself.

Fourthly, we have the modest and humble reply of the Righteous by way of disclamation to this imputation.

Fifthly; We have implicitly supposed the relation believers stand in to Christ, though, hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, imprisoned, yet Christs brethren.

Sixthly; We have Christs acknowledgment of the poor and least as well as of the greatest and richest of his disciples in this day of his great Immense Power and transcendent Glory, the King, attended with all his Angels, owns these to be his brethren.

From the whole of this Context I shall lay down these Nine observable Parts from the Connexion of the verses :

Part 1. That the true demonstration of our eternal Election to glory is through our obedience and Friendship to Christ, prepared for you so qualified: *chosen in him before the foundation of the World*, Eph. 1. 4. *through sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thes. 2. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to Salvation of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, 1 Pet. 1. 2. *elect through Sanctification*.

Part. 2. It is our Lords way in his dealings and proceedings with men, to render a reason of his so proceeding with them.

Part. 3. Jesus Christ in his distributions to men in Judgment, hath a special eye to their works respectively.

Part. 4. That works of mercy, charity, and almes, bear a superintendency over all works and duties whatsoever, as to acceptance with God, and profit to our selves in time to come.

Part. 5.

Part. 5. That it is incident to Christs dear friends and brethren, to suffer hunger, thirst, nakedness, and all manner of distresses whilst on earth.

Part. 6. Jesus Christ in his Celestial glory at the right hand of his Father doth espouse the state of his Disciples and Saints here on earth.

Part. 7. It is the nature of one truly acceptable to Christ to disclaim all worthiness in themselves, they see no such worth as Christ seeth in them.

Part. 8. Jesus Christ doth record and register each particular action of charity proceeding from one Saint to another, if but a draught of drink.

Part. 9. The poorest Saint, or true believer, in his lowest state and Condition is by Christ owned as his brother.

Of each of these parts I shall speak a few words briefly, and hasten to finish this paragraph.

Part. 1. The first Part doth arise from the Connexion of these verses with the former, which was, *First, that the true and infallible demonstration of our eternal Election to glory hereafter, is by and through our Cordial Obedience and friendship to Christ.* See how this part is raised, *the Kingdom was prepared for you before the Foundation of the world* (who are these) those who feed, cloath, and own Christ here in his lowest state in his members; Those three Scriptures before named are very pertinent and pregnant to our purpose to bear a testimony to this Part; weigh what St. Paul saith, 1 Eph. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the Foundation of the World; as vers. 5. predestinated us to the adoption of Sons by, in, (or through) Jesus Christ.* None are elected but as they are in Christ, 2 Thes. 2. 13. *He hath from the beginning chosen you through Sanctification,* Those Thessalonians foreseen by St Paul to adhere to the last

last Antichrist, excepted, who received not the truth in the love of it, and so demonstrated themselves not to be elected; but these, *verse 13.* are elected, as they are found abiding in Christ and his doctrines: you saith the apostle, *are of these who are Sanctified, chosen before the Foundation of the World*; as here in our text. So that herein it doth appear that you truly and certainly are chosen by him, in as much as you are found in the way that lead thereunto. To the doth that place in *St. Peter* agree, *elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience*, not without. This application of Election is never applyed to any but as they appear called, and the application of Election is by the Scripture suspended where these due qualifications are wanting; as for example, The person without the Wedding-Garment is supposed by Christ one of those not chosen or elected, *Math. 22.* he was only come in upon the invitation, not elected.

But against this it is objected from *Rom. 9. 11. 12.* in these verses (in a parenthesis) *before the Children had done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election may stand, not of works, but of him that calleth*;

To this I answer that this Text doth not at all relate unto this part before us, and so it will easily appear if we consult the original place *Gen. 25.* First, because this Text doth not refer to particular persons, but nations: Secondly, neither doth this Text relate to eternal, but temporal good and evil: Thirdly; neither are either of the persons actually loved or hated till good or evil appears from them: it was only said *before the elder shall serve the younger.* Fourthly; neither can the works here spoken of intend Gospel-Obedience, but works of the Law, as is plain *verse*

10, 31, 32. The Use that we may make from this Part to our selves, is,

1. From hence be instructed to measure your Election by your effectual Calling and Conversion. Many are at a great loss in themselves about their Election, and many have been upon the point of Desperation, whilst they have been upon the quest on, whether they were Elected or no. Are ye of those that the Kingdom is prepared for before the foundation of the World? you may know it by this: you are prepared also, see *Rom. 9. 23, 24.* You are Vessels prepared unto Glory by Sanctification and Friendship to Christ.

2. Would you be making your Calling and Election sure and certain? then the way to effect it, is to grow in grace, according to what *St. Peter* calls for, *2 Pet. 1. 10. Add to your Faith Vertue, &c.* Those that experience increases of Grace, and answer to every Duty called for by Christ in them, and from them, as here in our Context, may read their state to be sure and certain, and such are those for whom the Kingdom is prepared before the foundation of the World. So much for the first Part.

Part 2. *That the Lord Jesus in his dealings and distributions to all sorts of Men, doth not proceed according to his Royal Prerogative, though in his highest Royalty and Glory; but according to undeniable reason, Jesus Christ renders a reason of his proceedings on both sides.* And this way of proceeding is God's way from the beginning of the World. When God will save *Noah*, and drown all the World, he gives his reason on both sides, *Gen. 7. 1. For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation, and for the rest he gives this reason, for the imaginations of their heart were only evil, and that continually.* So
in

in that eminent differing dispensation to the Righteous and wicked, *Isa. 3. 10.* God gives the reward *For they shall eat the fruit of their doings; for the reward of their hand shall be given unto them.* And so in all Cases God is very ready to render a reward of his Dispensations to Men: therefore he invites them to reason with him. God is not Arbitrary in his proceedings with Men, but upon equal and rational grounds. And were not this the manner of Gods proceedings, how should every mouth be stopped, as they shall be in the great day.

1. I know many will plead the Sovereign Power of God in this place, from *Rom. 9. 21.* *Hath not the Potter power over the Clay?*

For answer to which, I say, The great design of the Apostle, is to set forth the sole power that God hath (being the free Donor of Salvation) here to make choice of what terms or conditions he pleaseth, in order to the way of saving men, whether by the deeds of the Law, or Faith in Christ; and he hath absolutely rejected that way of the Law, and made choice of Faith in Christ as the terms of Salvation; as is plain, *Rom. 3. 4.* By the same lump *the posterity of Adam.* Yet however the making these Vessels different, is not only the bare Will of God, but upon terms. See the original place, *Jer. 18. 10, 11.* *2 Tim. 2. 21.* The consideration of this part may administer great satisfaction to poor souls, they have a very righteous God to deal with; who will judge righteous judgment, not according to his Prerogative, but according to the works of each Person: which leads us to the Part, which was this, That God in his distributions to men in Judgment, hath a special eye to mans work respectively, *Come ye blessed of my Father, for I was as hungry,*

hanged, and ye gave me meat, &c. I shall be very brief as to this Part, because it doth border upon the former. And besides, this Truth is so apparent, that the very current of Scriptures contribute to the proof of it. We have a cloud of witnesses as to this Part, the recompence from God to Men is proportioned to their works, whether good or evil. This Rule was stated by God at the first in the dayes of Cain and Abel, when we read of but two men in the World, Gen. 4.7. *If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted, if evil, sin, or punishment, lyeth at the door.* This Rule God proceeds by to Abraham, Gen. 22. *For because thou hast done this thing, therefore will I bless thee.* If any one question the truth of this Part, let them read these Scriptures, Psal. 62. 12. *I sa. 3. 10. Rev. 17. 10. Prov. 24. 12. Ezek. 18. 33. Mat. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 17. Rev. 2. 23. Chap. 20. 13. Chap. 22. 12.* and by the taking in these Scriptures, I hope you will easily be satisfied of the truth of this Part.

Yet some will be ready to Object, That if God rewards men according to their works, and men have only what they work for, where then is Grace? St. Paul saith, *We are saved by Grace, not by Works.*

I Answer, We must distinguish between Legal and Evangelical works: therefore St. Paul tells us, it is *through Faith*, the work of Faith is not excluded in part of salvation.

2ly, The way propounded in which we are saved is of *Grace*, we thought not of it.

3ly, We are saved by *Grace*, if we consider the vast disproportion between the wages and work: all our Obedience is nothing compared with the Reward. Though God rewardeth every man according to his works,

works, that is, in kind, good for good, yet not in quantity; all we do is not to be compared with the recompence of reward; the Saints are by Christ counted worthy of the Kingdom for which they suffer, *2 Thes. 1. 5.*

4thly; Salvation is free, and of Grace, because the strength by which we act is from himself: we may say of all we do in order to salvation, as David saith of the people, *1 Cor. 29. 14. All things of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.*

And whereas many are apt to Judge that this Parable doth incourage man to trust to his own righteousness.

I Answer That our own righteousness must suppose a righteousness without faith, or distinct from faith, and that trusted in without an eye to Christ and his righteousness: but know this that there is a righteousness called *the Righteousness of Saints*, and this Righteousness of Saints upon true and right believes hath an honourable esteem with Christ. *Rev. 19. 8. the white linnen is the righteousness of Saints:* and *John* saith, *he that doth righteousness is righteous, he is righteous.* Now because this part seems to border upon the former, I shall leave but a brief word of application unto it and that is this; *That God is no respecter of persons*, according to *Acts 19. 35.* that is a certain truth which we ought to receive. Now herein doth God clear himself from respect of persons, in that he doth dispense to each person according to his works.

Part. 2. From hence we may take great incouragement to righteousness and holiness; Study what *St. Paul* speaks, *1 Cor. 15. 58, Your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Part. 3. The Consideration of this part may be

means to caution persons against sin : because thou shalt be certain to receive according to thy works.

Part. 4. And the main is drawn from the reason here given by Christ, which doth center in Charity; the Part was this, That Mercy, Charity and Almes extended to Christs true brethren whilst here on earth, is above all services acceptable to God, and brings in greatest profit to a person at Christs appearance, these services of Charity are superintendent above all other services whatsoever in Christians. This part is founded upon 3 Circumstances in this Text, First, we have the grace of Charity only made mention of by Christ at this day ; therefore it must needs be mighty acceptable to him. Secondly, we have Christs favourable aspect and amicable Countenance on these thereupon. Thirdly, The Kingdom is received upon this very ground, Almes and Charity Distribution to the poor is compared to Sowing, 2 Cor. 9. which doth naturally produce increase, it is a casting seed into the earth, or, as *Solomon*; upon the waters. In handling this part, I shall speak to these five heads a few words.

First; prove the Point in both parts, the acceptance to God, and profit to our selves.

Secondly ; shew the nature and root of our Alms and Charity, in order to this end.

Thirdly ; offer some Scripture-Reasons why it is so.

Fourthly ; speak something to the Subjects of our Charity.

Fifthly ; make some use of the whole.

1. That Charity is so acceptable to God, when rightly performed ; See James. 28. this is Called *pure religion and undefiled before God*, or in his right ;

right; this is pure Religion, or the highest Religion.

2. This is Called *good Works*. Works of Charity above all works are Called *good Works*; they most all resemble God, who is good to all: That they are called good works see *Acts* 9. 16. spoken of *Dorcas* who the text saith *was full of good works*. 1 *Tim.* But (which becomes women professing Godliness) *good works*. *Heb.* 13. But to do good, and to contribute forget not; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

3. The person found in the services is in Scripture called a good person. *Psal.* 112. *a good man be called that is found in it.*

4. This service is very acceptable from those imputations put upon it; see *Luke* 11. 41. But rather give almes of such things as you have, and behold; all things are clean unto you. It appears to be of a cleaning nature. Moreover it bespeaks God to be his friend; in a pregnant place which we have, *Luke.* 16. 9. Make to your selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; it makes God thy friend after death if it be performed from a right root.

5. It appears to be acceptable, in that the Lord bears those works in mind, *Heb.* 6. God is not forgetful of your work and labour of Love shewed to his name, in that you have ministered to the Saints, and do Minister.

6. These services appear to be an acceptable service to God, because he doth declare that he loves a cheerful giver, 2 *Cor.* 9. It is said of *Cornelius* that his prayers and his almes were come up in remembrance before God, *Acts* 10. We have an eminent place *Phil.* 4. 18. but I have all, abound, and I am full having received of *Epaphroditus* the things which were sent from you

an Odeur of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable
well pleasing to God.

2ly, Charity is not only pleasing to God, but it
is profitable to our selves: 1. Here; 2. Hereafter,
at Christ's coming.

1. It is profitable here, many Mercies are pro-
mised here: See the singular favour shewed from
God to *Abimelech*, Jer. 39. 17, 18. foreshewing fa-
vour to *Jeremiah* when he was in the Dungeon, he
shall be delivered in the day of God's judgments for that
reason: So we have it, Psal. 41. He that remem-
bereth the poor, shall have many Mercies in this life,
preservation in sickness and deliverance from death,
strengthening upon the bed of languishing; God will
make all his bed in his sickness. If these be the
Qualifications, God will not deliver him to the will
of his enemies. Oh the many merciful Promises,
a charitable person is under at present: therefore,
saith Solomon, Eccl. 11. 2. Give a portion to seven,
and to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be in
the Earth; that is to say, that so thou mayest have
mercy in an evil day. See what a special present
priviledg belongs to such. Psal. 112. Such a one
shall not be afraid of evil tidings; these Mercies he
shall receive from God as tokens of his acceptance,
he shall procure the love and esteem of Men at pre-
sent: Oh how is a charitable person in the affecti-
ons of persons; the Apostle saith, Rom. 5. That
for a good man some would even dare to dye; that is, a
charitable man, he is so in the affections of men. These
are Priviledges here.

But 2ly, Hereafter it is profitable according to
our Text, there is a profit, Eccles. 11. 1. After ma-
ny dayes thou shalt find it, that is, after this life, these

in the Text and Parable after many dayes shall find
Pfal. 112. Such a one as hath dispersed to the
 poor, his righteousness endures for ever, *Matth. 10.*
 God shall reward him openly. *Luke 12.33.* Sell that
 you have, and give Alms; provide your selves Bags
 which wax not old, Treasures in Heaven that fail
 not; where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupt-
 eth. *2. Cor. 9. 6.* But this I say, he which soweth
 sparingly shall reap sparingly: and he that soweth
 bountifully, shall reap bountifully. *1 Tim. 6. 17.*
18, 19. charge them that are rich in this world,
 that they be not high-minded, nor trust in un-
 certain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us
 richly all things to enjoy: that they do good, that they
 be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to
 communicate, laying up in store a good Foundation for
 themselves against the time to come, that they may lay
 hold on eternal Life.

But may some say, May not I give all my goods to
 the poor, and yet have no profit, *1 Cor. 13.*

I shall therefore lay down ten Qualifications or
 Conditions in our Charity, or Alms necessary as to
 God's acceptance, and our own profit, which are
 these:

1. If thou wouldest find this Remembrance, Ac-
 ceptance, and Profit, do thy Alms secretly. Doubt-
 less this was the manner of those in the Text, for
 they could not remember they had done any such
 thing; therefore they had not designed observation
 or praise of men. This is one of those Rules given
 by Christ, *Matth. 6.* design secretly, not to be
 seen of Men; provided God sees, it is en-
 ough.

2ly, In thy Alms, to the end it may be accep-
 tably

ably taken, do it cheerfully, not grudgingly, 2 Cor. 9. *God loves a cheerful giver*, that doth it as to the Lord himself.

3ly, If thou beest able, be rich in good works : *Tim. 6. 17. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be rich in good works.* It doth not please God, for one richly blest in this world, to be poor and scanty in good Works. When Christ makes a promise to reward a cup of cold water, it must be understood that this is answerable to his poor ability : for *where much is given, there much is required.* The poor widow is by Christ commended for her two mites, because it was what she had, *Luke 18.*

4ly, In Charity and Alms we must give our own, not rob others, oppress or abuse others to give : we are not obliged to borrow to give ; we are, as we have received, to give : *Job* clothed the poor with the fleece of his sheep. *Solomon* counsels thee to honour the Lord with thy substance, *Prov. 3.*

5ly, If we would have our Charity acceptable, we must be speedy in it, not delay to do our almes. *Pro. 3. 28. say not to thy neighbour go and Come again, when thou hast it by thee.*

6ly, Thou must do thy alms with discretion so as it may be most answering to his needs and his profit. Thus it is said of the charitable man, *Psal. 112. 5. he guides his affairs with discretion.*

7ly ; In our alms and Charity we must do them with simplicity, not with partiality : though an enemy, one that hath done thee wrong, yet relieve him. *Rom. 12. 13. 20. if thine enemy hunger, feed him; distribute to the necessity of Saints: eye their wants, not their friendship to thee, if in need let them*
(§ 2)

them be who they will. See what *Job* saith to the
Job. 29. such as were ready to perish were the
 objects of his charity ; *he was eyes to the blind, legs*
the lame, he made the widows heart to sing.

8ly ; Our Charity should be done in hope
 faith ; as the plowman sows in hope, so ought we
 do.

9thly ; In love to God and Christ. This must be
 understood 1 Cor. 13. by Charity : *if I give*
my goods to the poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth
me nothing. We ought to give in love to God.

10ly ; They must be universally and constantly.
 We are Commanded to be ready to every good work
 at all times : not like the stony ground, *Math. 13.*
 for a season, and not continue. Charity with these
 qualifications hath its superintendency of all duties of
 obedience whatsoever ; for Mercy is more acceptable
 than Sacrifice.

But some may say, *why is almes so acceptable, and*
so exhorted unto above all duties ?

First ; Because a man in no works doth so resemble
 God and Christ, as in Charity ; therefore it is called
 for, *Math. 5. 16. that we might be like our heavenly*
Father. *Luke. 6. 35. Be ye therefore merciful, as*
your Father also is merciful. This makes *Paul* say
 to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, *Acts 20. that it*
is a more blessed thing to give than to receive ; because
 most like God, who gives all, but receives nothing ;
 a charitable person bears the image of God most per-
 fectly.

Secondly ; Almes and Charity to Christs disci-
 ples is so acceptable to God, from that tender love
 that God bears to his poor members. Parents love
 those who shew love to their Children ; and from the

the Love that Parents have to their Children, they Love to see them shew Love to each other. Gods Children are as near and dear to him as the apple of his eye, *Zeck. 2.*

Thirdly ; Because if Alms be done as they ought to be done, they be a true demonstration of our Love to Christ ; and he loves them that love him, *Pro. 8. 17.*

Fourthly ; Works of Charity do choicely demonstrate a person to sit loose from present things ; the Contrary whereof is Covetousness, which the Lord abhorreth, *Psal. 10.*

The next thing that I am to speak unto, is, to set forth who are the proper objects of our Charity in order to acceptance with God and Christ. Which I shall shew.

1. *Negatively* : not idle or slothful persons. See what *St. Paul* saith as to that, *2 Thes. 3.* the Apostle discourages his thorow dislike to such, and declares his Apostolical Injunction in that Case, which was, *that those which would not work, neither should they eat.* We are not to feed such, though they should be hungry.

Secondly ; affirmatively.

First; we must chiefly and principally relieve those who do most lively bear the image of God, in point of holiness ; they must be so like Christ, as he may say another day, *I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat.* That was the rule that *David* observed, *Psal. 16.* he extended his Charity to those who excelled in vertue. So *Matth. 10. Mark 9.* the ground is because they belong to Christ.

Secondly; your Charity must in the first place, and most strongly run out to those whose hunger, thirst, nakedness and imprisonment is for Christs sake ; in so

doing, you do most properly relieve Christ: relief to such so suffering, brings acceptance.

Thirdly, To those who succeed Christ in the work of the ministry on earth; in order to such do Christ speak in special manner, *Matth. 10. 40. he that receiveth you, receiveth me*, such (saith Christ) are worthy of their meat: to such especially doth *John* direct *Gaius* to shew Charity 3 *John* 7. 8. because that for his names sake they went out, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers of the truth; such are, or ought above all, to carry the most lively image of Christ, and may bear the name of Christ's brethren. Take an example how acceptable this sort of Charity was to God from the old Testament, 2 *King* 4. 8. from the Shunamitish woman to the prophet of the Lord who built a chamber, provided him, a bed, stool, table, Candlestick: for the favour of God to her. 1. She hath a Child past age, and hope; 2. When this Child died it is raised to life again as a requital of this Charity (as is plain in the Context.) The Use of this part may be first for Exhortation; Labour to be in a capacity to discharge this duty so acceptable to God; take pains in honest ways, that thou maist have wherewith to do good. See the Exhortation of *St. Paul* to *Titus*, *Maintain honest Trades*, as it may be read, to this end. So *Eph.* 4. 28. *Labour, working with your hands, that you may have to give to him that needs*. And this counsel is not only to Members, but Preachers and Elders: for it is a more blessed thing to give than to receive, in them. If this be so acceptable a service then let us labour to be found in it: who would not do that which will please God? this is a Sacrifice where-

with

with God is well pleased, *Phil. 4. 18. Heb. 13. 16.*

Fourthly ; Study the great profit, the certain and infallible profit of this duty : the return is sure and great, and it is not forgot : Christ remembers every part and action from this root. As you have opportunity do good to all, but especially to the household of faith : make you friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Works of Charity are of exceeding esteem with Christ, as appears by his bringing them forth at this day of his glory : for, *I was an hungred, and a thirst, and naked, and so forth.*

The Fifth Part was this, That our Lord keeps a particular record of the good deeds performed by his Servants. Our Lord seems here to take pleasure to particularize in every action one and other ; it doth not only please him to say, because you were charitable, and so take it by the great, but he doth enumerate and shew wherein. He doth not stop at this, that they are sheep, that they are righteous, but each particular action shall be brought out. When God of old would set out *Job* to the best advantage, he doth not only in the general say, he was a Godly man, but three times over he doth delineate him in several particulars : 1. he is perfect : 2. upright : 3. one that fears God : 4. one that escheweth evil : 5. he maintains this integrity, being tryed : 6. this he doth beyond all other men in that day, and in those parts. So for works ; see how Christ commends the Churches in particulars, *Rev. 2. 2.* of Ephesus he saith, *I know thy works, labour, patience, thou canst not bear with those that are evil ; thou hast tryed those that say they are Apostles, and are not ; and hast not fainted.* So of *Thyatira*, *vers. 9.* *I know thy works, cha-*
(S 4) *rity,*

city, Service, Faith, and the last more than the first.

1. The Lord doth this with a design to magnify the virtues and services of his Children, that their graces might look to the best advantage and largest magnitude.

2. This the Lord doth to set forth his distinct knowledge of what we do; not only doth he know in general, but in particular.

3. His goodness that he will not let slip the least service.

4. To set forth his exact Righteousness, he records, that he may reward.

Use 1. This may serve for a spur to industry in all good duties, they shall not any of them be forgotten. If we cannot do the great if we do the less, it shall be rewarded. The farthing is not forgotten, given by the widow *Luke 18.*

2ly. This may serve for a Check to hypocrisie; we need not Cover to be seen of men, we see the least act or service done to Christ shall be brought before his bar. *1. Cor. 4. 5.* God will then make man confess the hidden things of darkness.

3ly. From hence we may read the tender love that Christ bears to his disciples that he takes such pleasure to bring over each of their actions as parents do of their children: they are not content to say he is a good Child, but set it out in particulars.

Use 2. From hence we may be informed that Christ will proceed by the same rule against his enemies, *Psal. 50.* God will set their sins in order before them: and so, *Jude 14. 15.* not only shall their ungodly deeds, but their hard speeches shall be mentioned. So in the following verses we find, that Christ doth

doth as well and as particularly enumerate the neglects of the Goats as of the performance of the sheep. We now proceed to the 6th Point implied in the text which was this, That the lowest poorest most indigent wanting state in ourwards is incident to the dearest choicest and most acceptable Saints, Christs brethren; not only to be without possessions, lands, and livings, but without meat and drink, and dwelling-place: persons are sometimes accounted poor in comparison to Rich when they have but from hand to mouth, nor to spare. But our Text speaks of the extremity of poverty, thirsty, naked, the lowest state herein is incident to the best of Saints, such as Christ may own, and be content they should personate him, *I was a hungry, I was a thirst, I was a stranger.* The truth of this Part appears from what Christ spoke by way of preparation before hand to his disciples to arm them from such a state: therefore Christ foretels the poor to be the subjects of the Gosple-Church, *Mat. 11. 5. the poor receive the Gospel: ye shall have the poor alwayes with you. Mat. 26. 11.* and Christ was sent to preach the gospel to the poor, *Luke. 4. God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom, Jam. 2. 5.* Doth not this preparative saying of Christ & his Servants, suppose such a state to be the state of choice Christians, and the best of them such as are rich in faith? But Secondly, to prove this Part we have matter of Fact; this hath been the state of the best; *David* himself at some turns sustained hunger believing, but we have a lively instance of this state in the holy Apostle *St. Paul*, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, yet liable to the great extremity of poverty. See *1 Cor. 4. 11. We both hunger, thirst, and are naked, having no certain dwelling-place.* Here we have this holy precious Saint exercised with four of these

these distresses in our text. See again 2 Cor. 11. 27. *in weariness and painfulness, watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings,* (we must not here understand religious fastings, but fastings for want of food) *in cold and nakedness.* And this was so common a Condition, as that it grew Customary unto him, *Phil. 4. 12. I have learned to be full and to be hungry.* We read of a *Lazarus* yet worthy of *Abraham's* Bosom, though a beggar at *Dives* gate. Yet I would not be mistaken in this, as if I encouraged a trade of begging; I fear there are but few of our common beggars of this stamp; I dare not allow it. It is true, *David* begged once or twice in some particular necessity, but not constantly. I think the generation that make a trade of begging, are the worst of people and such as God allows not; they are under such a curse as the posterity of *Judas*, which was pronounced as a severe Judgment, *Psal. 109, 10. let his Children be vagabonds and beg, let them seek their bread.* There are some poor whom God is specially concerned to take care of, these are the poor we have in our text, *Psal. 34. this poor man cryed.* There is a Congregation of poor who may be stiled *Gods poor*, *Psal. 74.* I might urge the state of our Lord Christ who was poor for our sakes, 2 Cor. 8. he had no habitation many times, he was hungry, and thirsty.

Obj. *but why doth God expose his dear servants to such a state,*

Answer, from a three-fold ground. First, with respect to themselves; Secondly, with respect to himself; Thirdly, with respect to his brethren.

1st, As to themselves, 1. God doth it to humble them, who many times are not able to bear the contrary. This is the reason that God renders, *Deut. 8.* he suffered them to hunger and thirst in the wilderness

ness, to humble them to prove them. 2. To teach Israel to live by Faith; therefore they must have but from hand to mouth, their daily bread; to make them know that *man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.*

3. To make them relish future mercy, the land flowing with Milk and Honey, that he might do them good in their latter end, *vers.* 16. Heavenly things are sweet to a poor hungry Soul rightly qualified.

2ly. God doth this to try those that are rich, whether they will do their duty; they were born for such a day, *Psal.* 17. 17. *a brother is born for adversity*: by this way God tryes their love and sincerity to Christ; see these texts, 2 Cor 8. 9. chap. 9. 13. Phil. 4. *Not (saith St. Paul) that I desire a gift, but fruit that might abound upon your account.* Thus we, from good reasons known to God, know Gods people are such as may be very acceptable to him, and yet may be very poor as to outwards.

Object. But it is not said, *Psal.* 34. *The Lyons shall suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall want no good thing*? From hence we may gather, that hunger shall not be the state of those that fear God.

Ans. 1. All that is promised in that place, is, that *they shall want no good thing*; but sometimes hunger is good for them that fear God, as you have seen from *Deut.* 8. this Part may teach us not to measure Gods special love by his dealing to thee in outwards; one that God is angry with may flourish in this World, whilst one whom he dearly loves may want bread. Doth not *Solomon*, say *Eccles.* 9. 2. that *all things come a like to all*? yet how often are persons apt to measure the favour of God by these his dealings?

Secondly, This may help to bear up the hearts of right.

righteous persons: be not discouraged under poverty and a low estate, study that word, *James 2. 5. God hath chosen the poor of this World, rich in Faith and heirs of the Kingdom.* Study the state of *Jesus Christ* himself, he was often hungry, though the Son of God.

Thirdly, If thy estate in the world be low, Consider there is a special duty lyeth upon thee in that Condition to live by Faith, and to be content. God took it very ill of *Israel* when he brought them into a low estate in the wilderness, and they did not believe, but murmured against him. Learn that lesson that *St. Paul* learnt, *Phil. 4. in all estates to be content.*

To the end I might dispatch this paragraph according to promise with brevity, I shall only touch two Parts more, and so conclude; the one respects the disclaiming of the righteous to *Christ's* reasons rendered, the other respects the reply of our Lord to take it off by way of explanation: wherein we have a worthy Part, though but implied, supposing the relation that these stand in to *Christ* his brethren. The 2 parts are these. First, *That it is the nature of a truly righteous person in Christ's account, to have a mean and low esteem of their best performances for acceptance with Christ and Salvation.*

The Second part is this, *That true believers in Christ Jesus, though poor and despicable in the World, yet stand related to Christ and his brethren.*

1. *A righteous person is ready to disclaim his own righteousness for Salvation.* In handling this Part I shall, 1. Endeavour to Confirm the truth of this part from Scripture: 2. answer an objection founded on some seeming Contrary Scriptures: 3. give two considerable reasons: 4. make some Improvement as to the truth of it. There is a vast difference be-

between a righteous and a wicked man in this respect, a *Saul* will justify his disobedience, *1 Sam.* 15. 20. but a righteous *Job* will not justify his righteousness, it must be forced upon him: as here, our Lord draws the emblem of a righteous and naked person to the life, *Luke* 18. under the name of a *Pharisee*, and a *Publican*: the Pharisee thinks himself righteous, and doth pertinaciously plead it; *I fast twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: he boasts of his righteousness; but the Publican seeth nothing in himself worthy taking notice of. See what frame of Spirit *David* is in, *2 Sam.* 7. *What am I, or my Fathers house?* *2 Chron.* 29. 14. he sees nothing in himself. So *Job* is full to this purpose, who is a man Justified by God to be one perfect or upright; one that feared God, and escheweth evil; yet he can see no such thing: *Job.* 9. 15. *whom if I were righteous I would not answer.* *Job* 40. 4. *behold I am vile*, yet a perfect man in Gods esteem, a very charitable man, *chap.* 29. in his own understanding when he was to deal with man. So *Daniel*, a man greatly beloved of God, *Chap.* 9. *We present not our supplications in our own name.* And this lesson *Christ* teacheth, *Luke* 17. *say, when ye have done all, we are unprofitable Servants.*

But it is objected, *Do we not find three eminent Servants of God pleading their own righteousness, Nehemiah, David, Hezekiah, Nehem.* 13. 14. *Remember my good deeds: Psa.* God rewarded me according to my righteousness, and the cleanness of my hands: *Hezekiah, Isa.* 38. 3. *Remember how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart*, done that which is right in thy sight; doth not these speeches savour of another Spirit? thus *Job* 9. 20. *If I should justify myself, my own mouth would condemn me, then if I should say I were perfect, it would prove me perverse.*

verse. See what David saith, *Psal. 130. 3. If thou shouldest mark iniquity, who can stand? Psal. 143. 2. In thy sight shall no flesh be justified.* Now how shall we reconcile these two sorts of Scriptures?

Ans. To reconcile which, we must diligently consider the different acceptation of righteousness in Scripture:

1. A Righteousness as to Actions.

2. A Righteousness as to Persons; and this considered under a two-fold opposition:

1. There is Righteousness in opposition to Wickedness.

2ly, Righteousness in opposition to imperfection; and in that abstracted sense, *there is none righteous, no not one*, *Rom. 3. 10.* no man righteous in the abstract; nor no man righteous in God's sight, but by interpretation and imputation, as God pleaseth to accept in Christ. But let us examine those three instances, of *Nehemiah, David, and Hezekiah.*

1. As to *Nehemiah*, Chap. 13. the Righteousness and good deeds done by him, which he pleads, were comparatively to be considered as he was a Magistrate, as he pleads, Chap. 5. 15. The other Governours were chargeable, so was not I, *because of the fear of the Lord.* So that Comparatively he could plead Righteousness, that he was more righteous than his Predecessors: yet this plea of his is with an eye to God's Righteousness in the multitude of his mercies, as Ver. 22. which doth not contradict our part.

2. See that of *David*, *Psal. 18. He hath respect to his Righteousness*, as to *Saul*, and in that case he had been righteous as to him, and that *Saul* is forced

ced to confess that he was more righteous than himself; and according to this Righteousness of his, God had now rewarded him, in giving him the Kingdom, he had patiently waited, and not been unrighteously hasty.

3. As to *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. He being suddenly surprized with a dreadful threatening and following sickness, so suddenly upon a choice manifestation of Love and Zeal for God's Name in the business of *Rabshakab*, was amazed to think what might be the cause (that is to say, the extraordinary cause) and he could upon search find no immediate Cause, but rather the contrary; therefore upon this he weeps, and pleads with God *as to his walkings and perfection of heart, not for Heaven and Glory*: but he pleads what he pleads in order to an addition to his dayes *in the Land of the living*. The like we see *Jer. 39*. As to *Abimelech* for his mercy shewed to *Jeremiah*. And these very men upon a general view of their best actions, were very humble: and it is one thing to put God in mind Historically of what they have done, and another thing to claim acceptance meritoriously for them done.

But we have two Reasons, why truly righteous persons look so meanly on their own best Duties of Obedience.

1. Because such persons have alwayes before their eyes the pure Majesty of God and his Glory, this humbles. *Job 9*. This makes him say, *Though I were righteous, yet would not I lift up my head, but make supplication to my Judg*, saith Job, *thou art my Judg*. This sight of God did make Job *abhor himself in dust and ashes*, Chap. 42. *Because his eyes had seen God*. So *Isaiab* is humbled at the sight of the Majesty of God, *Isa. 6*. *I am undone, I am a man of unclean lips*.

lips. This sight strikes an awe upon the Righteous as it doth here on these in our Text: These see Christ upon his Throne of Glory. We have an eminent place, *Tir. 3. 5. Not of Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Grace he saveth us.*

The second Reason that Righteous Persons are so ready to disclaim their own Righteousness, is from a true sight of their imperfections in their best services. A truly righteous person seeth sin in his best performances; therefore not worth the pleading with God: he sees his own righteousness but as filthy rags; he can say of his Faith, as the Man, *Mar. 9. 24. Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* They see their prayers want the Incense of the Angel to be offered up with them, *Rev. 8. 4.* St. Paul was conscious hereof: for, saith he, *though I know nothing by myself, yet I am not thereby justified,* *1 Cor. 4. 4. He forgets what is behind, and presseth towards the mark,* *Phil. 3.*

Use. If these be the Characters of a righteous person: Then a Christian may to a good degree know how it is with him, what his state and condition is. Now do you look upon your selves, in and for what you do; are you humble, or are you lifted up? a truly righteous person is full of good works, but he is regardless of it. *Cornelius* was a man full of prayer and almes, but he makes no noise of them, till we hear of them, from another hand (or from heaven); so was *Dorcas*, but we have no noise of them, till she was dead, till it arose from others. It is the Spirit of an hypocrite to cry up what he does. See *Mat. 6.* labour to be humble in all thy duties of obedience for they are mixt with imperfections.

Second-

Secondly, Labour to be rich in good works, it is our duties to remember to do good and not to forget, but leave God to remember the good we do. Not that a Christian should do good ignorantly, that is to a degree to do evil, but leave God to remember it, who is not forgetful of your work and labour of love, in that ye have ministred and do minister, *Heb. 6. 10.* I now proceed to the last Doctrine in order to the close of this Paragraph, which is this.

Doctrine, That the poorest meanest indigent wanting righteous persons are Christs Brethren, who is the Son of God and Lord of Glory: Jesus Christ acknowledgeth the receivers as well as the givers to be his Brethren; *In as much as ye have done it to the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto me.* [(*minimorum*) the smallest; Christ ranketh his Brethren into three ranks.

First, Rich.

Secondly, Poor.

Thirdly, Poorest.

Now Christ in his highest glory is not ashamed to acknowledge the smallest in this relation, *Heb. 2.* he is not ashamed to call them Brethren: Jesus Christ only owns himself to be the first born, the eldest Brother, *Rom. 8. 29.* That he might be the first born among many Brethren, this relation Christ is freely ready to own before men. See *Mat. 12. 50.* *He that doth the will of my Father, is my Brother, Sister, Mother.* A poor creature that wants a bit of Bread and a cup of Water, yet if he be Sanctified he is Christs Brother.

But how comes Christ to be a Christians Brother?

I Ans. Because Christ and they have one Father, God. This is Plentifully acknowledged in Scripture,

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1 Pet.

1 *Pet.* 1. 3. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten these Saints *St. Peter* with us unto; *St. Paul* doth freely appropriate this relation *Gal.* 1. 4. God our Father; and this our Lord teacheth us to own in our Prayers, *Mat.* 6. So *Eph.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1. 2 *1st Cor.* 1. 3. Our Father: when ye pray, say, Our Father: and in that eminent and pregnant place from Christs own mouth, *Joh.* 20. 17. Say to my Brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father. So that the truth of this Doctrine doth undeniably appear, that Christ doth freely own believers indefinitely considered, the very meanest to be his Brethren. Let me from this Doctrine urge a few instances and conclude.

First, What a Treasury is herein opened of comfort and encouragement to poorest Saints: art thou indeed Sanctified in Christ Jesus, he is thy Brother, this consideration speaks great comfort to Saints in every condition, and in every duty.

Secondly, As to thy Tryal and Judgment, consider thou art to be tryed and judged by thy elder Brother; he that is in that immense power, and transcendent glory, may a true believer say, is my Brother, my Fathers Son. It was a great encouragement to *Jacobs* Sons (when once they came to know it) that *Joseph* who was in such honour in *Egypt* was their Brother, I am your Brother, saith he.

Thirdly, Then if you can but upon sure grounds prove this relation, that you are Christs Brethren, that your extract is from the same Father, then you are great Heires. So saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. If Sons then heires, heires of God, joynt-heires with Christ. There is a large inheritance to be divided among the Sons of God who are Christs Brethren, if thou

thou findest thy self thus near related to God and Christ.

Fourthly, Labour to walk worthy of such a relation, that you stain not the reputation of your kindred. It is storied of a Heathen that was invited to a great Banquet, and he heard there was to be there present a noted Harlot; the Heathen asks Counsel how he should behave himself there; it was answered, *Only remember thou art such a Kings Son.* So only at all times remember thou art Christs Brother, this remembred will guide thee how to walk.

Fifthly, If Christ owns the poorest for his Brethren, do so also in the Church, own the poorest member if Sanctified, be not ashamed to call them Brethren though thou art rich.

So much for that Paragraph ending with the fortieth verse.

We now proceed to ver. 41. *Then shall he say also unto them on the Left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

We now proceed to the second part of Christs Judicial proceeding on his Throne relating to those now on the left hand. And the manner of Christs proceeding is after the same manner as before with the righteous.

First, To pronounce sentence.

Secondly, Give the reasons.

Thirdly, Suffer a reply.

Fourthly, To take it off.

That which we have first to take notice of is the dreadful severe sentence which is here pronounc'd against a considerable part of the flock divided out of the vast number convened before Christ, called *these on the left hand,*

In order to which dreadful sentence we have two Circumstances by the way as an Introduction unto it.

First, The time, when this sentence is pronounced or takes place, set forth by this Adverb of time [*Then*] at the same time, immediately after his clearing the Sheep, and then when Christ is in his glory with all his holy Angels. [*Then*] The Spirit of God is careful to note the circumstance of time, as I might shew you all along, and not as an empty circumstance, but it hath weight in it, *Mat. 24. Then was Christ led into the wilderness to be tempted,* in order after such preceeding occurrences.

So here, after Christ in his imperial glory hath congratulated his dearly beloved Brethren with an amicable face of love and delight, he now changeth his face and turns to these on the other hand; his smiles are turned to frowns, his love to wrath.

The Second Circumstance by way of Introduction is the Character of the persons who are here decyphered by *those on the left hand*, who before might have easily understood their state by their separation to that side from the rest. From this Preface I only note by the way.

First, That the order of Christs proceeding in judgment is to begin with the best first. First to dispatch the righteous into their intended glory, and then proceed with the worst.

Secondly, That the dreadful and amazing sentence upon reprobates may be by them perceived and understood before-hand, there was enough done in their first discountenance to amaze them. The dread of the wicked begins *before the time*, as the joy of the Saints: when the judge on the Bench cries, Tye him up, it is a dreadful beginning of his

his horror. The dread of reprobates may be read beforehand even in the conscience, 1 Job. 2. 20. *If our hearts condemn us, God is greater.* Against this supposal may be objected the bold Plea, *Mat. 7. Luk. 13.* To which I briefly answer, that none can so plead but such as have made a considerable profession as those had done.

Secondly, I though these might have known that their no acquaintance and Communion with Christ in their lives, might have been a sad presage of this sentence; yet their eye was so fixed upon their relation they stood in to Christ with the high Services in his name, that they could not admit of thoughts of condemnation. See how they plead with Christ notwithstanding this separation, as if they were wronged by him: from whence we may gather, that these were not the prophane or ignorant world on the left hand, but had professors as you have heard, and the circumstance of time also doth confirm the truth. It is then, the same time when Christ is upon his Throne and all the Angels about him.

But I proceed to the sentence it self, which breaths out nothing but dread, horror and amazement to those concerned in it. We have in this Sentence two considerable variations from the former Sentence: Those before are said to be *blessed of the Father*; here only *ye cursed*, not said *ye accursed of the Father*.

Secondly, As to the former it is said, *the Kingdom and Glory was prepared for you*, on purpose for you.

But here it is said *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, not said *prepared for you* (that is to say originally;) i. was prepared for him and his Angels.

We have in this Sentence several pathetical and Emphatical words and expressions; as,

First, *Depart*.

Secondly, *From me*.

Thirdly, *To accursed*.

Fourthly, *Into fire*.

Fifthly, *Everlasting*.

Sixthly, *Prepared or made ready for the Devil and his Angels*.

This Sentence divides it self into two parts.

First, The punishment of loss.

Secondly, The Punishment of sense.

First, Privation.

Secondly, Infliction.

1. Those concerned in this Sentence suffer the loss of Christs face and favour, which is a great loss considered as to Christ in this his glory at that time, as I shewed you before in the former Sentence, these are excluded from that amiable face of his whom to see in his glory is a great priviledge, *Esa. 33.* *The righteous shall see the King in his glory.* This Sentence is supposed to be with much wrath in the face; therefore *Erasmus* reads our Text thus; *Then with an horrible look turning to those that shall be on the left hand, he shall give a terrible Sentence; get you away from me, you whom the world flattered but by me accursed; go into fire that never shall be quenched, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* So *be.* The vulgar Latin also reads, *Get you away.*

Secondly, This punishment in the particular abdication from the face and presence of Christ in all his glory, *Depart from me.*

Secondly, Not only *depart*, but depart as cursed as execrable filthy things or persons; they suffer an eternal Excommunication from the presence of Christ

and Christ in all his glory. This part of the punishment of evil believers some account the worst part of their punishment.

Secondly, The positive punishment, and that contains three Circumstances.

First, The Soul and bodies misery unutterable.

Secondly, The everlastingness and eternity of it.

and Thirdly, The Society in this misery, *the Devil and his Angels.*

But for brevitys sake I shall sum up all that is implied and exprest in this Sentence; into six Doctrinal points.

1 Doct. That Jesus Christ in his second coming will appear with ireful Countenance, with wrath in his face, whilst he is judging wicked uncharitable persons at his Bar.

2 Doct. Wicked and uncharitable persons are not only rejected from Christs presence, but they are rejected as accursed with loathing and detestation.

3 Doct. That the punishment of Reprobates doth not only consist in loss of the face and favour of God, but in a most exquisite infliction of Soul and body misery.

4 Doct. That the punishment of Reprobates and such who are accursed from Christs Bar, is endless and everlasting.

5 Doct. That the punishment of Reprobates was originally prepared for the Devil and his associates.

6 Doct. That one part of the punishment of these accursed by Christ at his Bar lyeth in this their eternal society with Devils.

A few words to these in order, and first to the first.

The ire and anger of Christ appearing in his face at this day so contrary to what appears from him

to the righteous, this is prophesied of in Scripture, *Psal. 2. Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, Psal. 90. 11. who knows the power of thine anger? Psal. 7. 6. who can stand in thy sight when thou art angry?* Therefore David desireth that he would not rebuke him in his wrath, *Psal. 6. And that Christ (as well as God so considered) can be angry, Mar. 3. 5. it is said that Christ looked on them with anger.* And Christs anger considered in that day is very terrible; he is then a Lyon. *The wrath of a King, Solomon saith, is as the roaring of a Lyon,* as messengers of Death. Wrath in man is his rage; but wrath in God is his reason. There is great power in God and Christs anger, or look of God. With anger is *Pharaohs* Host spoiled. Christ but looking upon his enemies that sought him, with an *[I am he]* they fall backward, *Job. 18.*

The consideration of this Doctrine may serve to awaken Professors.

What Professors and Subjects of Christs wrathful face? this may be, if you be not careful in duties of obedience and Charity.

Secondly, This sad and dreadful state of the wicked and unworthy walkers, doth serve to set forth the inexpressible happy state of the righteous who are friends to Christ, that shall have his smiles and embraces at this day, unto whom Christ shall say, *Well done, enter into thy Masters joy with him.*

Thirdly, Walk so as to keep in love and favour with Christ here; keep communion here, for it will be sad to fall into this day of his wrath. But because this Doctrine is but implied, I shall say no more to it.

2 Doct. Wicked and uncharitable persons are not only rejected from Christs presence, but rejected as

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accursed with loathing and detestation.

This Doctrine contains two parts.

First, They are rejected.

Secondly, As accursed.

They are bid to depart, *Mat. 7. 23.* Where we have the same word, *Depart from me.* See also, *Luk. 13. 27.* *Depart ye that work iniquity.* Now this rejection must needs be very sad and a great punishment.

First, Because it is the pure and proper effects of Christs wrath and sore displeasure; it is a token of high displeasure to say to a man or woman, Get you hence; I had rather have your room than your company.

Secondly, A great and heavy punishment because it is the fruit of our own doings, rejecting the tender love of Christ in time, *Prov. 1. 27. Prov. 3. Surely he scorneth the scorner.* These rejected him first from their hearts; though they profest him yet did not possess him by his Spirit and love in their hearts. Many do in effect say to him Depart, *Job 41. 22.* they care not for his pure presence.

Thirdly, This banishment from Christs presence is a great punishment, from consideration of that great joy that persons shall enjoy for evermore. *Psal. 16. 10. Psal. 3. 6.*

Fourthly, A great punishment, because there is no *medium* between exclusion from Christs presence and depth of misery. If once a Soul be excluded, misery seizeth upon him as a Jaylor; and what God saith to *Israel, Hosea 9. 12.* may be inverted here, *And woe be unto thee when thou departest from me.*

Fifthly, Great punishment, because for ever is this exclusion; it is eternal, as you will hear more hereafter.

If this be so that one part of the punishment of
Repro-

Reprobates is in their abdication and rejection; then see the vast difference between the state of the righteous and wicked: the righteous are invited to close Communion, *Come*; these rejected, *Depart*. The difference is, embraces, rejections. But how comes this to be such a punishment seeing they do not desire Communion, but say to God, *Depart*.

1 Ans. In this day they shall have a glimpse of the good of Communion with God and Christ which they had not before; these shall know now with *Cain* what it is to be driven from the presence of God, and shall then say with him, *My punishment is greater then I can bear*, Gen. 4 13

Secondly, See how the Lord in this day proceeds by way of retaliation, whereas the righteous desired nothing more than Communion with God, they shall have it; and whereas wicked men bid God depart, they shall have it so.

Thirdly, See (according to our understanding of this Context) the vast difference between members and members of the same Society; as here some have Communion with Christ, others none, so in this day.

We now come to the second Doctrine, That they are not only abdicated and rejected, but as accursed persons. They were accursed before, but now they are by Christ pronounced accurst, and they are accursed with an effectual curse. In speaking to this second part of the Doctrine;

First, I shall shew what kind of rejection this is, to be cast off as accursed.

Secondly, Shew the certain effects that do infallibly follow.

Thirdly, Give you some reasons why Christ rejects them as abominable.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Make some application. 1. What this

And First, The Curse of God is as an Arrow shot out from his provoked wrath and sore displeasure. Therefore the Learned tell us, that the word *to curse* and *strike through with a Dart* is the same; *to curse* is as much in God as *to strike through with a Dagger or dart*. Some understand this word *to intend* a loathing detestation, and so they understand that in *Job 5. 3. I cursed his habitation*, or abhorred or abominated his habitation, I loathed his habitation. We have the Word used *Hab. 3. 14. Thou didst strike through their Villages*, or curse their Villages. So that *to curse*, *to loath*, *to abhor* and *strike through* are the same. Others read that *Job 5. I wished ill to his habitation*: these were the words of *Elihu*.

But (by the way) was it lawful for him to curse, strike through, or wish ill?

Answer. That men are sometimes said to do that which they Prophecie shall be done; so *Jeremiah* and *Micah* are said *to pluck up and destroy*, when they only prophesied what would be done. A curse from God is the highest token of displeasure. Herein was his high displeasure against the Serpent, *Gen. 3. God cursed him, Thou art cursed above all the beasts of the Field*. So it was to *Cain*, *Gen. 4. when he had kill'd his Brother Abel*. To be accursed is the highest Sentence of Excommunication or Anathema. And as it is reported of the Preachers of some Churches, that in this Execration or Excommunication they used to thrust them out of the presence of the Brethren by force; so it seems here in this case, *Depart ye cursed, ye are Anathema*. To curse is the effect of the bitterness of the Soul; and from
that

that root it sprang in Noah to his Son Canaan, Gen. 9. 25. *Cursed be Canaan*, who had behaved himself to unworthily to his Father in uncovering his nakedness. The like we read of *Michal David's* wife, of whom we read, 2 Sam. 6. 16. who when David danced before the Ark in his linnen Ephod, it is said, *she despised him in her heart*; It might as well have been said, *she cursed him in her heart*; for these words are used promiscuously one for another as the Hebrew Rabbys tell us. 1 Sam. 2. Concerning *Elyes* house, *They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed* (or cursed.) So it is commonly understood by *Jobs* words, *it may be they have cursed God in their hearts*, that is, had light and undervaluing thoughts of God. And Lev. 20. 9 we find that *curfing* and *honouring* Father and Mother are opposed one to another. I might multiply instances of this kind. Man abhors, despises persons or things upon a threefold consideration.

First, As they are infectious with the Plague.

Secondly, As unlucky, (as men call) as the sight of such a Person or thing presages some evil to him that sees it.

Thirdly, As they are monstrous, deformed or mishapen.

Now in this latter our Text seems to be understood; Christ abhors wicked men as deformed, degenerate Persons, Psal. 73. 20. *When he awakes he shall despise their Image*; or as some use the word, *curse their Picture*. No Toad can be more loathed by man, than such Persons by Christ. At that day a Curse from God is an introduction to all evil, as a Blessing is an introduction to all good. Prov. 3. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked*. It is an inexpressible Judgment to be cursed by Christ

at that day, because the effects will follow. If man curse, the effects will follow sometimes; but if God curse, it follows always. If *Eliphaz* curse, *Job* 5. the effects follow, his Children are far from safety. If the old Prophet curse the Children that called him *Bald-pate*, they are destroyed by the Bears, *1 King. 2. 24.* but if God and Christ curse, it never fails, *Psal. 37. 22. They that are accursed of him, shall be cut off.* If Christ curseth the Fig-tree forthwith withers away. Therefore it must needs be none of the least part of the curse of the wicked in this day, to be under Christs curse, [*depart ye cursed.*] I have dwelt the longer upon this word, because I might set out the dreadful bad estate of bad Professors, Hypocrites and uncharitable; they are the objects of Christs soul abhorrency at this day, they are cast off as execrable things. As if he should say, Get you hence, I cannot abide to see your faces.

But why doth Christ so abhor such bad Professors?

First, Because of all Persons none so ungrateful, as such who have tasted of his love and grace and tender mercies. This was that which aggravated *Judas's* sin, he had received love from Christ from time to time, and he had returned hatred for love, therefore he is cursed, he and his generation, all like him; see *Psal. 41. Psal. 10. 9. They rendered evil for good; he that eat bread with him, lift up his heel against him. Psal. 55. It was not an enemy that did it, but thou my Friend; had it been an enemy I could have born it.*

Secondly, It is abominable to Christ from the nature of this sin.

First, The sin of these persons is a sin of treachery.

275 these are treacherous as they stand so related to Christ. The sin of Gods own people of old was by him reckoned treachery; as the unfaithfulness of a Wife, of a Child, or Servant is treachery: these were his Manual Servants, these were Citizens, and therefore must expect more severe dealings with than strangers and foreigners.

Secondly, As to the nature of their sins they are reckoned upon the account of Hypocrisie, which is the first-born of all sin in the sight of God, and of all hateful to Christ. The punishment seems to be originally prepared for Hypocrites. If you would read the hatefulnes of this sin in Christs heart, read *Mat. 23*. We have eight foul woes by him pronounced against Hypocrites: no people is absolutely the people of his curse as Hypocrites. The Hypocrite above all shall be surprized, *Esa. 65. 14*. *Esa. 66. 18*. When Christ would pronounce the most severe punishments to men, he tells them they shall have their portion with Hypocrites, *Mat. 24. 31*. See how St. Peter speaks to such, *2 Pet. 2. 1*. *A had been better for them they had never known the way of truth.*

Thirdly, They are so abhorred and detested and accursed by Christ, because these have not only their own sins but the sins of others upon them. On the evil that bad professors do to others by seducing and leading others out of the way, causing others to stumble at the wayes of God, leading the blind out of the way.

We know God pronounced a severe curse of old upon those who should cause the natural blind to walk out of the way in a civil sense considered, *Dent. 27. 18*. much more will they deserve a curse who cause the blind to wander in a moral sense considered.

Some

Some think this may be understood to be the reason why *Dives* was unwilling his five Brethren should come into that place of torment in the Parable, *Luk.* 16. because by that means his own torment would have been augmented. I shall only close with a word or two of inference or application.

First, We see by this what a discriminating day this day of Christ will be. Here are those abhorred and cast off as accursed who little expected it; they rather expected to have been entertained with embraces, as we may perceive by their bold plea, *Matt.* 7. *Luk.* 13.

Secondly, From hence we may learn that negative holiness will not serve in this day. These were clean creatures in a common sense considered, as you have heard, fit and allowed for Sacrifices.

These are not cursed nor abdicated for acts of injustice as we can find, but want of Charity, acts of goodness and love to Christ; they had been warring in relieving Christ in his poor members: not a word of swearing, Whoring, Murdering and debauchery.

Thirdly, This should put all persons upon a serious and cordial examination of their state; how it will be at this day with them. You may find now how it will be then.

Fourthly, Labour to bless, own and love Christ in his poor members; be beneficent to them: you see the contrary is that which provokes Christ to this detestation of these. Christ loves a cheerful giver, and abhors a closefisted professor. So much for the third Doctrine: we now proceed to the fourth Doctrine which was this.

4. *Doct.* That the second and positive part of the punish-

punishment of reprobates consists in real, material and most exquisite misery and torment, extensive to Soul and body, by fire.

This Doctrine is the very product of our Ten. In handling this Doctrine I shall prove the truth of it from other Scriptures, that fire is the punishment of barren professors. See *Mat. 3. 12.* *He shall abundantly purge his floor and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* From which Scripture note these things.

First, That Jesus Christ in his proceedings with his own people acts as a Husbandman, who is gathering in his wheat, with which he must needs bring in chaff also.

Secondly, There is a necessity of threshing, fanning or winnowing this his wheat in order to segregating the chaff, which is here called the purging his floor.

Thirdly, We have a choice discovery of singular esteem for the wheat, by gathering it into his garner, a place for clean grain.

Fourthly, We have contained his total and absolute rejection of the chaff.

They are executed under the name of chaff, and that by fire. That by the chaff are intended ungodly and reprobates, is plain from *Psal. 1.*

Fire is the threatned punishment of the rash angry Brother, spoken of *Mat. 5. 22.* *He shall be in danger of Hell fire, (gehenna) torment.* This is the punishment of the Lares, *Mat. 13. 42.* *They are bound in bundles and cast into a Furnace of fire:* This is the punishment of the bad fish gathered in the net, see ver. 58. *They are cast into a Furnace of fire;* this is the punishment of him that doth not cut off his offending hand and foot, *Mat. 18.*

Hell

Hell fire; this is the punishment of them that worship the beast, *Rev. 14. Cast into a lake of fire*; this is the punishment of all those whose names are not in the book of life, *Rev. 20. 15.*

It is true it is a question amongst some of our modern Writers, whether by fire in these places is to be understood material fire: but the generality are of opinion that it is to be understood material; and should we depart from the literal sense and grant it to be immaterial fire, it will be dangerous; for it is a rule in Divinity, That we are not to depart from the letter unless we be forced to it to preserve other Scriptures from violence: Now I know no Scripture can be wronged by taking these Scriptures in the literal sense.

Secondly, If we should give way to question the materiality and reality of the torments of Reprobates, it will make way to question the reality of the reward of the righteous which we would believe to be real.

Thirdly, That it is material fire we have the earnest of it in the punishment of *Sodom*, which fire proceeded from God and was a punishment representing this we are speaking of.

Fourthly, If this fire was immaterial or allegorical, the Scripture in some place or other would have told us so; as in some other cases, *Gal. 3.*

Yet we grant that this fire doth considerably differ from our ordinary fires in six circumstances.

First, As to the unexpressible and vehement extreme heat of it: as one well observes; If all the fire in the World were contracted in one, and all the combustible matter in the World brought to it to feed it; yet all this fire is but as a fire painted upon the Wall in comparison of Hell fire. Therefore it is

called a Fire of Brimstone, a River of Brimstone, *Esa.* 30. 33. *Rev.* 14. 20. Now we know that that sort of fire made of Brimstone is of all fires most scorching and tormenting: if two or three drops fall upon our flesh, how will it torture it?

Secondly, It differs from our fires, as this Hell fire is made by God himself, prepared, compounded and ordained by God, *Esa.* 30. 33. God hath been much exercised in his wisdom and counsel in contriving this fire that it might torment, and his wrath blows it up and continues it.

Thirdly, In our fires there is light as well as heat: but this though it be fire, yet here is no light as all; but utter darkness, whilst consuming fire. We have it often called utter darkness; *Jude* calls it *chains of darkness*; and *blackness of darkness*: *Egyptian* darkness, that may be felt: their portion is darkness, whereas the Saints portion is light.

Fourthly, Our fires only consume or torment the bodies not touch the Soul; whereas this fire taketh hold of both body and Soul, as our Lord teacheth, *Mat.* 10. 28. *Fear not them that kill only the body; but I warn you whom you shall fear; fear him that can kill Soul and Body in Hell;* that is, after the resurrection can torment the body and mind also. The reprobate in Hell hath his mind as full of torment as his body; and there is reason it should be so, and that they should suffer together, because they sinned together, for a wicked and ungenerate person sins with delight of mind as well as body.

We read a pretty parable of an Hebrew Doctor to this purpose.

There was a certain man planted an Orchard, and being to take a Journey, appointed certain watchmen to look unto it, and preserve it from robbing
by

by others or wronging from themselves; and accordingly he appointed one man strong limbed but blind, and another man that could see but was a Cripple: And in his absence the blind man and the Cripple agree together, the blind to carry the lame; and so they robbed the Orchard. When the Master understood the agreed deceit, he severely punished them both together. The whole is but a Parable; the moral is this: The body cannot act without the mind, nor the mind without the body; therefore they are joynt in sin and joynt in punishment.

Fifthly, Our fires consume or annihilate all that come into them, they reduce all into its own nature, turn flesh into ashes; but this doth not so: here is not an annihilation. But I shall have occasion to speak to that afterwards.

Sixthly, This is called *unquenchable fire*, *Mat. 3.* It is noted by the Learned that a river of Brimstone cannot be quenched.

That there is such certain punishment for the reprobate we have the general consent of the most approved Authors both ancient and modern: *Zanchy, Austin, Lambert, Aquinas, Gregory* and many others.

Secondly, The name of *Hell* or *Tophet* in itself carries in the name of it torment; it was drawn from the torture that the Idolatrous Jews put their Children upon. They made a hollow Idol of Brass with his arms open, in whose arms they put their Children when their Idol was red hot from the fire within: hereupon there was great screeching with the Children, and they used to beat Drums and sound Trumpets to drown the noise with.

This place partly from the Image and the tor-

ment is called *Tophet*, and the punishment of the damned is in the forenamed place called *Tophet*, *Esa.* 30. 33. That there is real torment to come for the wicked we have the testimony of the Devil who believes and fears it, *Mat.* 8. 29. *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* the Devils believe and tremble at the thoughts of these torments. So do the consciences of wicked men who have felt the earnest of it. Before they went hence they have witnessed with a witness this torment. We have a threefold testimony to this truth in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*; the scope of which is to set forth the dreadful inexpressible torment of wicked uncharitable persons hereafter. We have the testimony of *Abraham*, we have the testimony of *Dives* himself, we have the testimony of Christ in this case who makes this Parable.

Heathens have been convinced of the truth of this by the improvement of Nature. We read of one who coming to visit *Olympus*, finding him closed up in a dark Cell, which by reason of heat and swarms of Gnats and stinging Flies was uninhabitable, he being asked why he confined himself to such an afflictive place, he makes answer, This is a small matter of punishment if he could avoid the torment of Hell fire, the stinging of Gnats is nothing to the stinging of conscience. Many Heathens have been satisfied that there is bliss and torment after death.

But it might have seemed strange some Ages since to have spent any time to assert the truth of this real torment for wicked men after Judgment; yet the unhappiness of our Age is such that there are many whose endeavours have been either to overthrow the Scriptures altogether, or else to corrupt them from their simplicity in all things, and in this also,

That

That the Judgment and torments of men is in their consciences here, that there is no resurrection, no future state, all is here. But I may say of such as St. Paul saith of those who did in his time deny the resurrection or say it was past, (as these do) let them deny as much as they can, yet it will not turn it aside, *the foundation of God stands sure*; there will be a resurrection and eternal Judgment to their cost who so say.

First, From this Doctrine we may perceive the cursed nature of sin. Oh what an antipathy is in the nature of God against sin! See his severity against the first sin that ever was committed, Gen. 3. In Paradise, God curses the Serpent, the woman and the man. And in the end see in our Text the severity of Christ in this unspeakable torment. And one thing I would beseech all our Allegorizers upon Hell torments seriously to weigh, and that is, the reality of Gods first punishment; was it not literally as God speaks? ask the Woman and she will tell you it is true in the letter of it, that she brings forth in pain; and do not all men really go to the dust in a literal sence for it? why then should it be strange as to the time to come, that Gods threatnings to the reprobate should be as really and literally performed as those in the beginning? That God means as he speaks in promises, precepts, and threatnings may be seen in several cases, the threatening of the old World, the making the Ark, the Bow in the Clouds, which last may fully satisfy us, we see with our eyes that what God said is so fulfilled, there is a Bow in the Clouds. Therefore have a special care of corrupting the word of God as to the precepts, promises or threatnings. There is no ground but Gods present silence and defer'd

execution that occasions this thought. This is prophesied of by God, *Psal. 50. Because I kept silence, but I will set thy sins in order.* God reckons all sinners to be his adversaries, and he will have a time to avenge himself of his adversaries, *Psal. 7. 11.*

Secondly, Consider what ground of lamentation with great admiration, that the greatest number of persons are posting to this place of torment, yet not sensible of it nor considering whither they are going; there is but a thread between most men and this eternal torment. And this is not only the state of the ignorant and prophane debauched world, that never profess acquaintance with Christ, but the greatest part of Professors also; but few of them walk as a people travelling toward the right hand. It is a certain truth if I understand any thing of the mind of God in Scripture, that there are but a few of strict Professors in outward appearance will escape this torment. And how comes this to pass?

First, Few believe the reality of what is here said.

Secondly, Though they do believe it, yet they put the evil day far away from them; they think they may yet live long and have time to prepare to prevent it, though we have not one hour of time that we can call our own.

Thirdly, Others trust to the grace, mercy and tenderness of God, as if they could have mercy and pardon from him when they will, with a word speaking, upon a dying Bed; not considering that Syllable in his name, *Exod. 34. 6. By no means clearing the guilty.* No, know that as Gods thoughts of mercy exceed our thoughts of mercy, so his thoughts of severity also.

Fourthly, Many trust to their standing profession and

and relation, they are Church members. So were these that Christ hath to do with in this Chapter, if I understand the scope of this Chapter, and what do they gain at Christs hands by it?

Oh then consider, the great and most weighty work that lyes upon each of us, is to labour to escape and avoid this wrath to come: And if the living and powerful belief hereof did rest upon us, it would make us labour not only to deliver our selves but others. See what St. Paul saith, *We knowing the terror of the Lord perswade men*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Do not be worse than Dives, who according to the Parable takes pains to prevent his Brethren from coming into that place of torment, Luk. 16.

Fourthly, Examine how the case stands with thee, art thou liable to this torment if thou dye as thou art, consider, or art thou upon good grounds in a way of escape?

First, If you are in a ready way to escape, you are united to Jesus Christ in a work of true regeneration by Faith, Love and Obedience; are you now gotten out of the Kingdom of Satan?

Secondly, Are your names written in the Book of life? for all whose names are not there shall fall into this Lake, *Rev. 20. last*. But how shall I know that, may some say.

First, Are your names recorded in the Church of God, as those *Phil. 4.* of whom St. Paul speaks?

Secondly, Are you assistant in the Gospel as they were?

Thirdly, Do you make it your business to mortifie every lust, even *your own iniquity*, according to *Mark. 9.* from 43. to 48. those that escape are of these.

There are five Circumstances considerable in these verses.

First, That there is a certain torment, else Christ would not have made it an argument of it.

Secondly, The torment must be great the deliverance from which is profitably purchased with such loss and torments, as cutting off and plucking out.

Thirdly, There is a connaturality between persons and their own iniquity; eyes, hand, foot.

Fourthly, It is very difficult and hard Service to escape Hell, to cut off and pluck out, especially to do it himself to himself.

Fifthly, Notwithstanding so hard, yet it must be done else we cannot escape Hell torment. So much we have in this, *Mark. 9. 43. to 49.* It is a matter of great concernment to know how the case stands with us in this matter. Now if upon examination we find upon true and solid grounds that we have some good hope (through grace) to avoid this place and state of torment, oh what ground of unspeakable joy is here to a poor Soul? there is more cause of joy in this than can be from casting out of Devils and doing mighty works.

That is not a sufficient ground of joy, this is. See *Luk. 10. 20.* But if upon examination you want this hope, remember what is in the Parable said to *Dives, Luk. 16. They have Moses and the Prophets;* make use of the word of God, that is the only means to come to avoid this place of torment.

I now proceed to the fifth Doctrine observed, viz. That the pains and punishment of Hypocrites and unbelievers are endless and eternal. As they are not tolerable so not terminable. The truth of this Doctrine is plain from the constant language of

in old and new Testament. The fire is *everlasting, eternal, unquenchable*. This is the Scripture language. I need have said nothing to this Doctrine, were it not that we are fallen into such a day wherein persons do study to avoid the force of those Scriptures which are of most concernment to consider of.

Therefore that which I shall chiefly endeavour as to this Doctrine is,

First, To strengthen this Doctrine from Scripture arguments.

Secondly, Answer some objections made against it.

Thirdly, Give a Second sort of Testimony to this truth.

Fourthly, Make some Use of the whole.

1. Consider the Testimony of Scripture, *Mat. 3. 12. He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* This fire is called *everlasting fire*, *Mat. 18.* *Hell fire* and *eternal fire* are taken one for another in Scripture; it is not Hell fire except it be eternal; no fire is eternal but Hell fire. It is called eternal damnation, *Mar. 3. 29.* But I will give you one place in the Room of many that sets it forth to be endless, *Mar. 9. 43. to 48.* where we have this fire five times called *unquenchable*, and three times *the worm that never dieth*. Certainly there is more than ordinary in this that our Lord, who is never guilty of Tautologies or making vain repetitions, should so often reiterate this word *not quenched, not quenched*, five times over. There is a just cause of repetition; and by this reiteration,

First, We may learn the certainty of this truth. As in other cases in Scripture, when things are doubled in Scripture, it is to shew the certainty.

Secondly,

Secondly, This truth so reiterated was not only a truth but a truth that lay much upon Christs heart; this eternity of torment lay much upon Christs heart, he was much affected with it. And

Thirdly, Christ would fain affect his Disciples also with it.

Fourthly, Whereas our Lord adds this three times, *the worm that never dyeth*, we are instructed in these two things.

First, That the severiy of the punishment it self is endless.

Secondly, That the creature in this fire is eternal and endless, that he shall not be annihilated in it or consumed to nothing and so an end of his torment as to himself. By the fire is understood the punishment it self, by the worm must be understood the person himself.

The truth of this Doctrine is yet further confirmed from what the Apostle speaketh to the *Thessalonians*, 1 *Thes.* 8. 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of God and the glory of his power.* The same is farther confirmed, *Rev.* 14. 19, 20. *The smock of their torments ascended up for ever and ever.*

Now our Lord is greatly desirous that persons might take warning and be awakened before they come into this gulf with *Dives*.

It is said *he lift up his eyes being in torment*, he was not awake till he came there irrecoverably. Therefore our Lord beats so long upon this string, the danger is very great and persons greatly secure.

Object. But it is objected against this truth by our Critical Age; that *ever* and *everlasting* have an end, yea *ever and ever*, and they urge *Jer.* 7. 7. when God tells *Israel* that they shall dwell in the Land

for

for ever; see ch. 25. 5. yet say they this is endless.

I Answ. As *Canaan* was a type of that rest which remains to the people of God, *Heb. 4.* so it is for ever and ever; putting their present and future estate together makes it ever and ever.

Secondly, *I Answ.* That although *ever and ever* have an end in some cases, yet it cannot be always so understood. As for instance, when it relates to the eternity of God, when God is called *the eternal and everlasting God*, and where it is said *he reigns for ever and ever*, I hope the objector will not say that God and his government is to terminate.

So that *ever and ever* in that case cannot have an end; neither will it (I hope) be thought that the joy and happiness of the righteous shall have an end, which yet, if *ever and everlasting* have an end, lyeth in danger to have an end also.

So that in our understandings of these speakings of the Spirit of God we must diligently observe the scope of the place and thing spoken of, that must guide us in our understandings. And then it will not appear that what is spoken as to the punishment of the Reprobate, is temporal but eternal.

Some will urge what the Apostle *Jude* speaks of the punishment of *Sodom*, to weaken our position, who it is said *suffered the vengeance of eternal fire*. To which I answer, That punishment might be called eternal from these considerations.

First, From the perfection of it.

Secondly, From the continuance of the burning (as it is reported) throughout all Ages unto this day.

Thirdly, From the nature of it, or rather the matter of it, it was fire and Brimstone, and that from Heaven,

Heaven, and so of the same nature as Hell fire shall be.

Fourthly, Because that overthrow and punishment is never recovered, they have as it were an entrance into eternal punishment as the Devils are said to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.

To further strengthen this position, that the punishment of reprobates is endless, I urge these Arguments following as reasons of the Doctrine.

First, From the Judgment it self pronounced at that day, it is eternal, so called *Heb. 6. 2. Eternal Judgment* without exception; and it is a principle to be believed that the Judgment indefinitely considered is eternal, not eternal to the righteous, and temporal to the wicked.

Secondly, The bodies of each are at that day raised in an immortal estate, redeemed by Christ from mortality where *Adam* left them. To this *Daniel* speaks, *ch. 12. 2. Many of them that slept in the dust awaked, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt.*

Thirdly, It is endless with respect to the circumstance of time when it is pronounced, when the day of grace is past and the day of wrath takes place, the sentence at that day is irrevocable, no appeal from this Bar; as *Abraham* tells *Dives* in the Parable, *there is a great gulf fixed so as that they that are in Hell cannot come where Abraham is.*

Fourthly, The sentence then pronounced is to endless pain, because there can be no means to expiate sin, no Christ to dye again. If a person dye in his sins, he rises in them and is condemned for them, and there can be no after means to expiate them, *but the wrath of God remaineth on them, Joh. 3. 36.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, From this second death there is no redemption; none but the Son of God could redeem man from the first death, but who shall redeem him from the second? We read of no redemption from the second death; not man by all he can do or suffer, *Psal. 49. No man can redeem his Brother nor give a ransom to God. There remains no more sacrifice for sin.*

But some will frame an Objection from Christs words, *Mat. 5.* that we may suppose a payment of our debt by punishment hereafter because Christ saith he *shall not come out (till) thou hast paid the utmost farthing.* From whence some (in my hearing) have pleaded a possibility of escaping by paying.

To which I answer by explaining the Period *untill*; which bears a twofold acceptation in Scripture: sometimes it is understood for a limited time and sometimes for an endless. As when it is spoken of *Michal* the daughter of *Saul*, wife of *David*, who despised *David* dancing before the Ark, it is said, *She had no Child until or till the day of her death*, It might as well have been said, she never had a Child more at all. And it is sometimes understood in a limited time, as *Psal. 123. Our eyes wait upon the Lord till he have mercy on us.* We read of another place, *Luk. 12.* where Christ speaks of few and many stripes, some shall be beaten with many stripes, others with few stripes: from whence it is argued that some shall have less and some shall have more; from whence some urge difference of periods.

To which I answer; That Christ in that place hath not respect to length of time but weight of misery, though in his speaking he alludeth to the custom of the *Jews* paying by stripes, who gave many
of

or few according to the fact. And this is more clear if it be considered with the future state of the Saints; for though it be concluded on all hands, that the happiness and glory of the Saints is endless, yet the glory of the Saints differs in the degrees of it, as one Star differs from another, not in truth of continuance.

But it is further objected that it cannot agree with the Justice and equity of God Almighty to punish a moments sin with an endless torment.

To which I answer in three words thus.

First, As to the design of the sinner, he deserves it; he would have sinned longer if he had lived longer; he sinned out his own eternity, and as the Hebrew phrases it, he must be punished God's eternity. As for instance, a Company of Gamesters are set down to play at Cards or Dice all night, but one comes and blows out the Candle and so they can proceed no further: The question is whose fault it was they did not play all night? Not the Gamesters. So if the sinner were not prevented by a short life, he would still sin. When men lived nine hundred or near a thousand years they were as bad at last as at first.

Secondly, Consider that the God he sins against is an infinite eternal God, which doth greatly aggravate the sin as for instance, for a person to speak against an ordinary person is easily past by, but to speak against a King is death. The Majesty of God whom the sin is committed against, doth greatly magnifie the sin.

Thirdly, Such a person who is so punished is but punished according to his own choice. He had eternal life and eternal death set before him, to take his choise, *Deut. 11. 26, 27. ch. 30.* Life or death was Gods offer to him and he chose this part, *Job. 3. 14. He chose darkness rather than light.*

And

And Christ complains they will not come to me that they may have life; therefore they must needs have death. These things considered do instruct us that to Preach Hell and damnation is to Preach Gospel Doctrine, it is the Doctrine of our Lord Jesus the only Gospel Minister. This was the Doctrine of St. John, *Mat. 3. Mat. 5. 25.* Christ persuades his enemies to make peace with him for fear of this Prison:

This is Christs Doctrine to the bad in the Church, *Mat. 13.* and to others, *Mat. 23. 14, 15, 33.* Christ Preacht damnation, *Job. 3. 36.* Such Doctrine doth St. Paul Preach, *Rom. 2. Tribulation and wrath upon every Soul of man that doth evil.* And see that thundering execration threatned by him, *1 Cor. 16. 22. Anathema, Maranatha.* So 2 *Thes. 1. 8, 9. Heb. 10. ch. 12. Rev. 14.* The Gospel is not only glad tidings but threatning upon refusal.

Secondly, If the punishment of reprobates is endless, then how doth this serve to set out the folly and madness of those that for a moments pleasure expose themselves to this eternal endless pain? Of which sort are most men notwithstanding. Well might Solomon call them *Fools, who make a mock of sin.*

Thirdly, Study and confer much with eternity; seeing such a state will be, consult it dayly, and in particular study this torment so as to avoid it; let this terror of the Lord persuade men.

Fourthly, Information to those on this side the grave and this eternal torment; know this for thy encouragement that God hath not necessitated thee to this state of torment, but on the contrary he is taking pains with thee that thou mightest escape.

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We have one Circumstance more considerable in order to the Close of our Lords Sentence to them on the left hand which is in these words (*prepared for the Devil and his Angels*) and doubtless it is not in vain that our Lord adds these words unto this Sentence. Before I lay down those Observations that may be properly deducible from these words added unto this Sentence, I shall briefly explain them.

First, Why is it said here *to be prepared*? *To prepare* in Scripture is sometimes curiously to work by contrivance.

Secondly, *To prepare* is to establish, ordain or fix. Thus it is taken *Esa.* 30. 33. But I have spoke more fully to this before.

Who is to be understood by the Devil? Under that name in the singular he hath many appellations or names by which he is called.

1 Answ. The chief of the Devils is here understood in this singular number. This is the most proper and common name to him in the old Testament, as in the New Testament his most proper name is *Satan*. This name *Diabolus* signifies to deceive, to tempt, to accuse. It is so properly his work to *accuse* that he is called by that name, *Rev.* 12. But why is it added here (*and his Angels*)? It is intended here his whole Regiment under his Authority; they are his Angels in subordination: as we read of *Michael* and his Angels, so we read of the Devil and his Angels. We may note by the way that there is an order amongst Devils and evil Angels, Monarchical not Anarchical is their order, called *his* as in subordination to him. Therefore we read of a Prince, a God, a King. Of this sort we have a Prince of Devils, the God of the World, *Belzebub* the chief of Devils. Those are the Subjects for whom originally this preparative

on is made, namely for this Prince or chief and all his whole Regiment. That Doctrin which I shall note from the words in order to the closing this Sentence is this.

Doctrin, That the second death or punishment eternal by fire is curiously wrought, ordained and prepared originally for the Devil and his Angels. Or thus: That the punishment of reprobates is the same punishment that is prepared for the Devil and his Angels; but one place of torment, one *Tophet* for them all. For the proof of this consider *Rev. 19. 20.* those who worship the beast are cast into the same Lake, and all whose names are not written in the book of life; As all the faithful followers of the Lamb shall be with him where he is, so all wicked men and Apostates shall be where the Devil is, that first Apostate; *they shall have their part with the Devil and his Angels.*

But why is this added, That it was prepared for the Devil and his Angels?

1 Answ. This explanatory circumstance is added to anticipate a threefold plea that might have been made.

First, That men might not think to plead an unavoidable decree of damnation to men before the foundation of the World.

But he doth with counsel alter the phrase to them, on the list, and tells them, it was prepared for the Devils. So what Mr. *Maisor* saith upon this place, God hath not made man for perdition, but as by sinning they joyn with the Devil.

Therefore *Jude* is careful to decypher those that are of this misery by their qualifications, *ungodly men who are ordained to this condemnation.* Some may be ready to think that Hell was so provided or prepared

prepared for them that there is no possibility to avoid it; no, Hell will have fuel enough if all men and women should be saved; therefore it is said for the Devil and his Angels. And again Maior on this place saith, *Thus he saith, not as to the merciful, prepared for you, but for the Devil and his Angels, to shew (saith he) that wicked men do voluntarily cast themselves into Hell (for whom it is not prepared.)* And Origen on this place saith, *Hell was not prepared for men as men, but as men through sinning prepared it for themselves.* And further he saith, *Men not God are Authors to themselves of their own woe; and God not men is the Author of Salvation.* To which these sayings of our Lord do well agree. And Doctor Hammond on the place saith, *Eternal Hell fire was not prepared originally for you or any of you or mankind, but for the Prince of Devils and his Angels that follow him, but now by your wilful defect is become your portion also.*

Secondly, It is supposed that we have this addition, *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, to anticipate any thought of impunity from consideration of greatness; for here the chief Subject tormented in this fire is the Prince and God of this World, the Devil; this *Tophet* was prepared for this King, *Esai. 39. last. Rev. 9. called Abaddon.*

Thirdly, To prevent thoughts of impunity from highness of profession; for who was higher than the Angels in profession? yet if they kept not their station, they are reserved in chains of darkness unto the Judgment of the great day, according to *2 Pet. 2. and Jude.* If this eternal fire were prepared for the Apostate Angels, then those of a lower extract as Professors being Apostates cannot think to escape. After this rate doth St. Peter argue, *2 Pet. and Jude*

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Of the last Judgment.

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and also Rom. 9. ch. 11. *If God spared not the natural branches, much less thee.* It is the received opinion, that once the Devils were good and Holy Angels, but now the principal fuel of Hell fire.

Fourthly, It is added that it was *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, to set out the greatness of the punishment of those persons; this was thought a condigne punishment for the Devils, therefore it must be very great. After this manner doth our Lord when he tells the Servant that he shall have *his portion with Hypocrites*, Mat. 24. *last.* that is, that he shall have a great punishment.

I shall only urge a few words from this consideration, that the punishment is the same with the Devils.

Then it should from thence appear that the sins of these in our Text was much of the nature of the sins of the fallen Angels, for it is usual with God to proportion his punishments to the sins of persons. If the question be askt what was their sins? I answer, That Apostasie from a higher state; *they kept not their former state*, (Jud.) The sin of the Devils was pride, the sin of the Devils is Calumniation or false accusing the brethren. But I shall say no more to this verse which contains the Sentence.

There remains yet four Circumstances to be spoken unto in order to a close of the whole Chapter, and to them I shall speak but a brief word. The four Circumstances are contained, ver. 42, 43, 44, 45, 46.

First, We have our Lord Jesus Christ indicating his Sentence to be most justly past upon them for these reasons, ver. 42, 43. *For I was an hungry and ye gave me no meat, I was a thirsty and ye*

Gave me no drink, I was a stranger and ye took me not in, naked and ye clothed me not, sick and in Prison and ye visited me not.

Secondly, We have the bold and pertinacious reply of these Goats to this charge, wherein they do implicitly charge our Lord with unrighteous Judgment, contained in ver. 44. *Then shall they answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in Prison, and did not minister unto thee?*

Thirdly, We have our Lords silencing reply to this their plea, ver. 45. *Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*

Fourthly, We have a ratification of both sentences by the certain execution of both, ver. 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

First, We have our Lord freely rendring a reason of this severe and ireful sentence, ver. 42, 43. We have nothing difficult in the words, therefore I shall summe them up in five D^s Crimes as followeth.

I D^oct. That our Lord Jesus Christ though upon the Throne of his Celestial glory, in his Judicial proceedings doth not proceed according to his Royal Prerogative, but according to demonstrative undeniable grounds of reason from the Creature.

Secondly, That the relief of the Saints in their pure and absolute necessities, is an absolute indispensable duty; if it be neglected, it is damnable.

Thirdly, Sins of omission are of a dangerous and damning nature, as well as sins of Commission. These are not charged for grinding the face of the poor, or oppressing the poor, but for withholding good from them.

Fourth-

Fourthly, Iesus Christ takes the unkindness shewn to his Sis.
as done to him, *ye gave me no meat.*

Fifthly, Uncharitableness to Christ in his members is a very high provoking sin. Christ here takes up nothing else to judge these by; yet here is enough to cast, condemn and execute Judgment upon them. First that Christ proceeds by demonstrative and undeniable argument and reason, see *Prov. 1.* *Because I called and ye refused, because ye hated knowledge and would not choose the fear of the Lord, I will laugh at your destruction and calamity;* read but *Ezek. 18. 33.* See there how God proceeds by reason. *Ioh. 3. 17, 18.* *Because they believed not in the only begotten Son of God, this is the condemnation. Here is the rational ground of it, because they love darkness more than light.* So *2 Thes. 2.* *Because they received not the truth in the love of it that they might be saved;* (Therefore) *Eph. 5. 6.* *For these things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience.* Tribulation and wrath upon every Soul of man that doth evil, *Rom. 2.* Oh how doth this speak forth the righteousness and goodness of God to admiration when he is upon the Throne in that eminence, power and transcendent glory with all his holy Angels; yet then by undeniable reason to stop mouths! Christ doth not say as Monarchs on earth many times, *I will do so because I will;* No, *Come let us reason together.* The consideration of this Doctrine may serve to take off all hard thoughts of Christ with respect to this day. But I will be very brief. I therefore proceed to the second, which was this.

2 Doct. That the relief of the Saints in their pure necessities in hunger, thirst, nakedness, is an indispensable duty. I put in *pure necessities*, because our Text hath it in matters of pure necessity, and this condemnation is upon this ground. The want of this duty in Gods people of old made their fasts abominable to God, *Esa. 58.* We have one Scripture may serve in the room of many *Iames 2. 13.* *He shall have Judgment without mercy, that shews no mercy.* This duty must be performed for these reasons.

First, Because therein we make a discovery of our love to God, and without this we cannot demonstrate our love to God, *Ioh. 3. 17.* *He that hath this worlds goods, and sees his Brother have need; and shuts up his bowels of compassion, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* He might as well have said, the love of God cannot dwell in him.

Secondly, It is such a duty as carries in it a true Character of the sheep of Christ. See the former Context. This is the Character, here lyeth the difference between the Sheep and the Goats.

Thirdly, The want of this duty is a discovery of the want of

faith. See *1am. 2. 15.* In this Doctrine we have a double rule for our Charity so indispensably required.

First, They are Saints, Christs brethren. Secondly, Such of them as are in necessity; both these are comprehended *Rom. 12. 13. distributing to the necessities of the Saints.* Saintship and necessity are the rule of our Charity in the first place. Though we are to do good to all as opportunity and ability serve, yet the Text and Doctrine is grounded upon Saintship. These are not here condemned because they did not level or make all common, but for not giving to necessity. The community we read of *Acts 2.* was voluntary and not compelled by a rule; we are required no more than according to our abilities to dispence. See *1Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19. 1Pet. 4. As every one hath received so let him minister.* So much for the second Doctrine.

Now I proceed to the third Doctrine which was this, That sins of Omission as well as sins of Commission are highly provoking, they are dangerous and damning. These are not charged with violence and rape or spoil upon the poor, nor charged for taking away their food.

The *Amalekites* and *Moabites* are excluded the congregation for ever for not meeting *Israel* with bread and water when they came out of *Egypt*, see *Deut. 23. 2.* nor for robbing them or meeting them in a hostile way. Take it in point of worship it is dangerous, God hath a controversie with the Nations, *Jer. 9.* for not being circumcised in flesh, as *Israel* for not being circumcised in heart. Eminent is that place to this purpose, *Luk. 7. 29.* they are charged with rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, for not being baptized with the baptism of *John*.

This informs us of the bad estate of many formal Professors in this day, that content themselves only with negative holiness though wanting in positive duties. So much for the third Doctrine. I shall speak a few words to the fourth Doctrine which was this.

4 *Doct.* That Christ takes the unkindness offered to his poor members as done to himself. I need say but little to this, because I had occasion to speak unto it in the precedent matter. This sets out the great affliction that Christ bears to his least and poorest Saints. It is from the dear and choice love that Parents bear to their Children that makes them respect those (if but a Servant) whose kindness to their Children, and take the ill carriages of them to their Children as done to themselves. But I pass this, and I shall speak a very few words to the fifth Doctrine which was this.

5 *Doct.* That uncharitableness to Christ is a very high provoking

eking sin! Here is no one thing mentioned in this sentence and condemnation but this one omission, the omission of Charity. Though doubtless this sin doth not go alone, yet this is that which is with weight upon Christs heart in this day; and the reason is, because there is no evil more contrary to Christs nature than this: for he is made up of goodness, and that appears by that pleasure and delight that he takes in the contrary, *Heb. 13: With Sacrifices of charity God is well pleased.* But as to Covetousness which is the contrary, see what he speaks of that, *Psal. 10. The Covetous man the Lord abhors.*

See how Nabals unkindness to David (when in distress) was relished, God sent death upon him for that very cause, see *Sam. 25. 38. The Lord struck Nabal that he died,* for that evil. Thus I have done with vers. 42, 43. I now hasten to the close of the whole. There remain but three Circumstances more to be spoke unto; and that which I am next to do in order to prosecute them is the answer and reply of these left-hand, uncharitable Goats. They seem to stand in their own justification, as if this ground upon which our Lord proceeds were not true; they had not been wanting in this duty of Charity, they plead an universal justification to the whole charge in all the several Circumstances of it. We may put a double construction upon these words.

First, They may be taken in the last sence, of this grounding their plea upon their ignorance of Christ in his members, laying the whole of the Word there to intend Christs person; When saw we thee in thy person so want? we never saw thee in thy person hungry, or thirsty, or naked, and we did not dream in the least that thou wast so immediately concerned in these pitiful poor inconsiderate indigent Souls; had we but imagined that they had belonged to thee, they should have been fed and cloathed. And this opinion seems to be favoured in Christs reply by way of explanation, shewing them for certain that these did belong to him whatever they thought, though so poor. But,

Secondly, It may be taken in the worst sense that they had no love to Christ nor any that did bear his Image, and so were wholly negligent herein; and this latter sense seems most clearly to agree to Christs severe proceedings in this Context. Taking of it as a bold pertinacious plea and defence, we may note this Doctrine; It is the property of a corrupt heart to plead his justification even to God himself and Christ himself; This was seen in *Adam* in the first transgression, *Gen. 3.* and followed in *Saul*, *1 Sam. 15.* This is that Spirit we read of,

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Mat. 7. We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out Devils. See the vast difference herein between those on the right hand; they are wholly upon a disclamour of their own righteousness which Christ imputes to them; Christ can hardly fasten any belief upon them that they had ever done such good as Christ chargeth upon them. These are the quite contrary. Self-justification is the property of one most guilty in Christs sight. But all these pleas are in vain, our Lord proceeds to take them off; which is our third Circumstance, ver. 45. it is a silencing reply, not one word more after this, (This reply hath two parts considerable.

1. First, The manner of it.

2. Secondly, The matter.

1. First, The manner, *Verily* or *Amen*. This word was much used by Christ when he was on earth, and it seems shall be used by him on his Throne, *Verily*, that is as much as to say, it is an infallible truth.

2. Secondly. It is considerable as to the matter that Christ doth so certainly assert; that neglect of charity to the poorest member of Christ was a neglect to Christ himself. This was so hard a truth to be received that Christ had need to confirm it with a *Verily* or *Amen*. From this verse with an eye to the former I note this Doctrine.

1. *1st Doct.* That all pleas, arguments and strivings with Christ in the last day will be unavoidable and successles. Christ will have the casting voice, the last word, every mouth must be stopped.

2. *2^d Doct.* That it is certain and undeniable that neglect of Charity to Christs poor needing indigent members is a neglect offered to Christ himself. That all pleas are in vain at that day I think I need not say much unto; it will be easily granted, and the truth appears, *Mat. 7. Luk. 13.* and in all this Chapter: all calls to Christ at that day are ineffectual, because his have been so before, and Christ does but retaliate, *Prov. 1. I called, ye refused.* Oh consider this in time, for this day will most certainly come.

The 2. Doctrine I shall speak a very brief word to, That neglect of charity is as to Christ whilst as to his poor members. As he that shews pity to the poor lends to the Lord, so he that is wanting in it is wanting to the Lord.

The fourth Circumstance is the confirmation of both Sentences, verse last. From which last sentence of Christ there is no appeal, it stands unalterable to all eternity. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

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